

DEMOCRACY AND CIVILIZATION

*A Contribution to the Understanding of
the Problems of Contemporary Civilization
and Politics*

by

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Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

St. Paul, *Letter to the Philippians*, iv, 8.

Tu autem, domine, qui et semper vivis et nihil moritur in te, quoniam ante primordia sæculorum et ante omne, quod vel ante dici potest, tu es et deus es dominusque omnium, quæ creasti, et apud te rerum omnium instabilium stant causæ et rerum omnium mutabilium immutabiles manent origines et omnium irrationalium et temporalium sempiternæ vivunt rationes.

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. I, sec. vi, 9.

Was soll uns denn das Ewige schaffen!
Geschaffenes zu nichts hinwegzuraffen!
"Da ist's vorbei!" was ist daran zu lesen?
Es ist so gut, als wär' es nicht gewesen,
Und treibt sich doch im Kreis, als wenn es wäre.

Goethe, *Faust*, Pt. II, 11598-11602.

La fé se alimenta del ideal y sólo del ideal, pero de un ideal real, concreto, viviente, encarnado, y a la vez inahesible; la fé busca lo imposible, lo abstracto, lo infinito, y lo eterno: la vida plena. Fé es comulgar con el universo todo, trabajando en el tiempo para la Eternidad . . . trabajar no para la Historia, sino para la Eternidad.

Miguel de Unamuno, *Essays*, Vol. II, p. 219.

We know of twenty-one cases in which the enterprise of civilization has been attempted hitherto. We know of no case in which the goal of human endeavour has been attained yet, while on the other hand we know of fourteen cases in which attempts to attain to the goal are proved to have failed irretrievably by the fact that the societies which made them have become extinct. The possibility of attaining the goal is still an open question in the seven cases of the civilizations which are still alive. While there is life there is hope; but in such a complicated and mysterious a question it would be rash to prophesy—even on the most plausible appearances—that the prospects of any one of the seven still surviving candidates are assuredly better than those of any of its competitors; and it remains indeed probable that none of the seven is destined to see the Promised Land.

A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. I, p. 159.

Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in History a plot, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave; only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalizations; only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen.

H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, Vol. I, p. vii.

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PREFACE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

I

THIS book, despite its length and its concern with philosophy (in some measure) and theology, as well as with politics, is not intended primarily for the philosopher or the theologian, but for the "intelligent reader" who is as puzzled and as disturbed as is the author by the state of contemporary civilization, by the unreasonableness, the general lack of a sense of purposiveness, and the perplexity as to the meaning of human destiny which are displayed in so many of its members. A world full of sceptics would be a terrible place to live in ; and the only alternative to a world full of sceptics is a world full of people with some belief; and by belief I mean something more than confidence in the ability of political systems and methods to achieve ends in conformity with the highest demands of human nature.

The first part deals with the nature of history, civilization, and politics; the second with the spirit which should animate the form if the process of which these are the substance is to be made intelligible.

It is, therefore, another contribution to the discussion about the nature of politics and history; or, more precisely, it is an attempt to approach the problems of civilization and politics from the standpoint of Christian thinking. The matters dealt with are those involved in our contemporary civilization, including, in particular, democracy, which, I believe, is the chief hope for a reasonable organization of society incorporating, encouraging, and disseminating the values which approximate most closely to those implied in the New Testament and in the Christian conception of man and society, and for the lack of which the world has been plunged into disaster twice in a generation.

It has become fashionable during these latter years to say that Christianity is not identical with any particular *form* of government or political theory. This, up to a point, is true; but it has become clear that certain political forms are utterly incompatible with Christian principles, whether certain churches sympathize with such forms or not. My own conviction is that any form of state which discourages human rights and what might broadly be called "liberality" is non-Christian, even anti-Christian; and this liberality has for its political expression enlightened liberal-democracy, through which lies the way to the achievement of an "open society." The present tendency in politics, however, is to consider "liberalism" outmoded. During the years of the Nazi regime in Germany "Liberalismus" was as fiercely hated as

Communism; and in theology the same tendency to disparage it is much in evidence. Yet, at any rate in the political sphere, it is the denial of this spirit which has led to the disastrous condition out of which nations are slowly and gropingly trying to find an exit.

The subjects, then, of the following pages are broadly two, and it is not always easy to keep them separate. In the first place I am concerned with the philosophical question of the meaning (if any) of history, and in the second with politics and ethics as the "stuff" or substance of history and of civilization and with political forms as their embodiment. The political is the realm of human decisions without which there can be no "history." There is, I believe, a Christian philosophy of history and of civilization, as there is a Christian approach to the element of political form, though this does not mean that what in Christian thought is called the Kingdom of God is identical with the programme of any existing political party, or that the Kingdom of Man, in the Utopian sense, is the Kingdom of God on the political plane.

This problem of history, that is, the problem of whether history has meaning and is capable of "interpretation," is one which has engaged historians and philosophers from Herder in the eighteenth and Hegel in the nineteenth centuries to Spengler, Berdyaev and Toynbee in the twentieth. Each of these has made a massive contribution to the "interpretation" of history; and although there are some who hold that history is too haphazard a thing to be either interpreted or philosophized about, in the problem of its interpretation is involved the very profound question of man's ultimate destiny. There are, of course, deep problems associated with the subject under review. In so far as we can speak of historical "periods" at all, is any one period preparatory to another, and in this way of no more than instrumental value when seen in relation to subsequent developments? Can the history of the past give us guidance which will be useful in the future? Or are all our time-divisions arbitrary and made only for the sake of convenience? Is history, as some would have us believe, just a chronicle, continuing without sense or purpose for an indefinite length of time? What can be said about those civilizations which have had their day and vanished from off the face of the earth? Is history a purposive movement? These questions, and others like them, present themselves to the mind and demand some kind of answer. The answer given in these pages, in so far as there can be an answer at all, is that history does not provide the answer to its own enigma, but that it must be sought in the trans-historical sphere.

In recent years Dr. A. J. Toynbee, with vast learning, has marshalled an incredible number of facts to illustrate the factors controlling the geneses and disintegrations of civilizations; yet there are so many things which fall outside any scheme which a philosopher of history might impose upon history or any interpretation of history which a theologian might read into it. History seems to be so often at the mercy of the incalculable and the irrational. We may wish to picture history to our own minds as an impressive unity, and so, in some ways, it is; yet we should take seriously Dr. Toynbee's warning against what he calls the "misconception of the unity of civilization." We may have arrived at the beginning of "world-history," but we cannot see far enough into

the future to imagine what may be the shape of world-history or the direction which it will follow.

Now, though the adoption of any particular understanding of history is in great part an act of faith, we can say that one major factor in the *breakdown* of civilization is moral defect. It is doubtless true that civilizations have been arrested because they did not evolve efficient technical methods of solving the problems set by their environment; but a purely physical or mechanical explanation of the origins, growth, and decay of civilizations is inadequate, for man is more than a physical being whose life is determined primarily by mechanical considerations. No analysis of history can be other than absurd which minimizes the "human" element, for history is the sphere in which decisions are made, and it is men who make the decisions, though nature may set the problems. This is particularly true of the problem of the decay and disintegration of civilizations, for as Dr. Toynbee shows in his great *Study of History*¹ (Vols. IV-VI), the process of disintegration is mainly brought about by factors over which human control can be exercised. The failure of civilizations, then, would appear to be due to some inner defect as well as to hostile environment, though the latter may in some cases have been a deciding factor.

The philosopher of history is, of course, confronted with what St. Paul described as the "times of ignorance which God overlooked," and, like God, has to overlook them; for he cannot do more than touch upon the problems raised by the question of arrested civilizations and the relation of the pre-Christian world to the Divine purpose in history. Dr. Emil Brunner is obviously right in saying that we cannot know or understand the relation of the whole created order to the divine end, and that what was apparently the most meaningless act in history (the crucifixion of an obscure Nazarene) became the most meaningful. The civilizations enumerated by Dr. Toynbee which have failed to survive may provide a problem the solution of which is impossible: if we knew more about them we might understand *why* they disintegrated or withered away and learn from our knowledge. But we are in the midst of a civilization which, if ignorant of the laws emerging from a moral interpretation of history, is *wilfully* ignorant and therefore responsible for its fate; its ultimate destiny may be ultimate doom. For us it is not so much the problems of arrested and frustrated civilizations which are of immediate significance but the nature and scope of the failures of a civilization which still lives. We can no longer plead that we do not *know* what are the laws which we have to obey. We know that we are confronted by the atom bomb *and* by the United Nations Organization. We know what are the chief forms of ignorance and what is the nature of the laws which we continually violate: we know that, whatever may be the ultimate purpose of history and whatever place our civilization may have within the total picture of human destiny, the movement from force to persuasion, the transition from "closed" to "open" societies from prejudice to understanding, are fundamental things if the Christian vision of the unity of mankind is to be realized in time, or even if what we call "civilization" is to survive. It may be, of course, that if this present civilization does not realize what Dr. William Temple in his Gifford

¹ Oxford University Press, 1934-38.

Lectures called "The Commonwealth of Value" another will take its place; but how and when we cannot imagine. There is no sign at present of the emergence of any such alternative.

It is, therefore, the task of every generation to discover and correct the moral and other defects which have been instrumental in bringing about the disintegration of previous civilizations and to perfect the political form which is most likely to make possible the dream of an open society.

For reasons which I do not at this moment propose to elaborate I believe that liberal-democracy is the political instrument most likely to produce human felicity on the widest scale. Many societies are not yet ready for it; others claim that they have outgrown it; those who believe in it have not yet achieved sufficient sense of corporate responsibility to make it truly effective. To it both socialism and fascism are hostile because for both the state is less an organism than a machine. Both, perhaps, have historically their place in the curious mass of contradictions which provide the impetus to historical movement. For Berdyaev the former is the "religion of the human ant-heap"; doom has already been pronounced on the latter. Whether a compromise or mixture will emerge in the form of a socialist fascism remains to be seen. I do not, however, identify liberal-democracy with nineteenth century political liberalism, nor with the economic democracy of modern socialism. The one is obsolete, the other too mechanical in its conception to do justice to the element of freedom in the Christian conception of man and of society. In the last resort liberal-democracy is a spirit, not a rigid political form; it is a spirit which should inspire *all* political forms, and which must be incorporated in a form without thereby being deprived of its spirituality. The form may be that of the organic state, but not in the sense in which German idealism and modern fascism have conceived it. Whatever else it might be, the liberal-democratic state should be a form of co-operative commonwealth achieving a proper balance between freedom and authority, self and society, the nation and the world. The "closed commercial state" of Fichte's later period, the *geschlossene Deutschland* so dear to Dr. Goebbels, the tariff-ridden nations of the twentieth century: these are the denials of what is meant by an open co-operative commonwealth. The state is an organism as the church according to St. Paul is an organism, for the Pauline conception of the separate, though complementary, function of the limb within the "body" should be applied to the conception of the state; without it the state becomes atomistic or centrifugal.

What, then, is this "liberal-democracy"? Señor Ortega y Gasset has described it as follows:

The political doctrine which has represented the loftiest endeavour towards common life is liberal democracy. It carries to the extreme the determination to have consideration for one's neighbour and is the prototype of "indirect action." Liberalism is that principle of political rights according to which the public authority, in spite of being powerful, limits itself and attempts, even at its own expense, to leave room in the state over which it rules for those to live who neither think nor feel as it does, that is to say, as do the stronger, the majority. Liberalism—it is well to remember this to-day—is the supreme form of generosity; it is the right which the majority concedes to the minorities, and hence it is the noblest cry that has ever resounded in this planet.

This spirit has been rejected and treated with contempt for a generation; yet it alone is the complete antithesis to the things which can be summed up in the great tragedy of modern Europe: trade barriers, persecution of racial and political minorities, degradation of culture, vilification and perversion of truth, the denial of individual rights by the majority to the minority, the satanic claim to the unlimited manipulation of political and economic power, the equalitarian tendencies of modern mass-democracy and the practical atheism which is inseparable from the whole complex of conditions which all these have created. Yet liberal-democracy must be understood in a broad sense, without attaching to it a fixed, rigid meaning. The deepest problem is: how to infuse into it the spirit which will animate and preserve it and make it continually creative. And that, too, is a theological as well as a political question. Augustine saw the nature of the problem as it presented itself to the Christian as the relation between the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena*: but he did not live in an age which was "historically" aware, and there is little in his *City of God* which commends itself to the modern reader. It is we of this modern age who are fully alive to the historical problem, for we have at our disposal not only a vast accumulation of historical knowledge; we have in addition the terrible example of our own time. We have lived through the judgment on the nations; but we do not know whether that judgment is to be repeated.

2

Anyone who has with seriousness and concern pondered over the condition of modern society may well ask the question: "How can these things be?"¹ The question has been partly answered by those who have brought knowledge and analytical skill to bear upon the problem of modern civilization. But when an answer is required to the further question: "How can they be otherwise?" the answers given are extremely unconvincing. Of analyses and diagnoses of our times there are plenty. There is in the minds of those with the necessary competence no lack of understanding of the character of the modern human crisis and of the forces of dissolution and of creation which are at work in it. We have, for example, the profound social analysis of Professor Karl Mannheim and the different but comprehensive and attractive study of modern civilization in Mr. Lewis Mumford's trilogy *Technics and Civilization*, *The Culture of Cities*, and *The Condition of Man*. The great German-Jewish novelist Jakob Wassermann has laid bare the neuroses and psychoses which have afflicted Europe for a generation. Nicolas Berdyaev has described what he calls "the disintegration of the human image." Modern art, exemplified by Picasso, Kokoschka, Otto Dix, Paul Klee, Henry Moore, and others, and music in its cacophonous form of swing, testify to the break-up of the organic conception of life and to the dissolution of form. The "modern" man shares the disillusionment expressed in Herbert Read's *Ode Written during the Battle of Dunkirk*:

¹ *The Gospel according to St. John*, iii, 9.

Happy are those who can relieve
suffering with prayer
Happy are those who can rely on God
to see them through.

They can wait patiently for the end.

But we who have put our faith
in the goodness of man
and now see man's image debased
lower than the wolf or the hog—

Where can we turn for consolation?¹

Yes: where? We feel that men are living in the shadow of impending disaster; indeed, no sooner has one disaster passed than another appears on the horizon. The twentieth century is a century of disasters: disasters exploding in the midst of an exhibition of vitality such as has not been witnessed before in human history; though I do not wish it to be thought that vitality is to be identified with creativeness.

Now the way out of the modern crisis is not to be found exclusively through sociological and political analysis or reorganization, which is really no more than a prolegomenon to the vast question of "How?" Analysis is no more a cure than medical diagnosis is a cure. But analysis there must be, as there must be medical diagnosis, and there is plenty of it. What is required is prescription and its acceptance. The curious thing about modern man is that he will not accept the prescription. In his sins of arrogance, pride, ignorance, and spiritual sloth, he imagines, as do all who suffer from them, that he "knows better." His future is in his own hands; but he is ignorant of the nature of his decisions and his indecision and of their consequences. He is ignorant because he will not and cannot see, for he has blinded himself. Those who possess some insight observe, in Mr. Lewis Mumford's words, "the failure of utilitarian man to fulfil the ends of life"², and may agree with Mr. Mumford that society "must build up balanced personalities." Yes: but how are they to be built up? and what are the "ends of life"?

It is here that the controversy begins. It is all very well to say that we must "create a new idolum," a new "super-ego," a "fresh plan of life" commensurate with the scope of the new world which is thought to be emerging. The trouble is that we are aware of the dissolution of the old world but not aware of any "new" world in the process of emergence. We pay lip-service to the phrase, but that is all. We lull ourselves with the comforting refrain that a "new world" is in the making; but all we are able to see is an old world, or the present world, in dissolution. There is none of the zest, the sense of adventure, the release of creative energy, the imaginative enterprise, which should be associated with a "new world" in the making. There is death, decay, disillusionment (in the West) decay of traditional religion, and political strife. There is, further, nothing in our contemporary civilization corresponding to the Christian church during the Dark Ages. When Rome, the City of Man, fell in 410, the hope of the City of God was alive in men's hearts. There

¹ Herbert Read, *A World Within a War*, Faber, 1945.

² *The Condition of Man*, Secker and Warburg, 1944, p. 419.

is no such hope of the City of God now, because men have ceased to believe that such a city has any relevance to this world. Worse still: they do not care if it is relevant at all; or they deny its relevance when it is pointed out to them. Along such lines there is no solution to the pressing, clamouring questions thrown out by modern civilization. There is only disaster, and it is time that this should be pointed out to a generation which has not even lost its faith because it never had any. That the consequence of this frame of mind is disaster cannot be proved by the method of scientific analysis. The anatomization of a changing world is a pastime perhaps easier to indulge in than any for those who have the necessary equipment. The prognosis of disaster is one which can only be made through the intuitive apprehension of the character of the social and intellectual changes in *reference to some fixed standard or principle*; and it is such a standard or principle that is lacking in the contemporary world, which is suffering from a hypertrophy of moral relativism.

The necessary ingredient of a revised prognosis of human destiny is not to be found in science, sociology, politics, or economics, but, however absurd and incredible it may sound to the "educated" modern man, in theology: that is, in hard, systematic thinking about the human scene and the nature of man in relation to the divine roots of being. The Christian answer to the question "How?" is far more comprehensive and realistic than that offered by scientific or any kind of humanism other than Christian, because it considers the manifold activities of the human scene in relation to the only adequate principle of integration: the doctrine of divine Creation, Sovereignty, and Redemption.

That is why this book ends with some account of the Christian understanding of history, though theology is not obtrusive in its pages until the final section. It is not a theological treatise, but it has been written against the background of the presuppositions of Biblical theology. To write such a book does not require any apology, even though it may, to the modern humanist who is so terribly afraid of being labelled Christian, appear to be the quintessence of intellectual obscurantism and obtuseness. It is, on the contrary, the endeavour of one who is fully alive to the character of the human situation of which he is a part to supply the element necessary to any intention to see this situation in its wholeness by doing justice to human nature in its entirety. In what I have written the reader will find adequate indication of where he may turn for a more comprehensive account of the Christian conception of man and society, for this book does not claim to be an exhaustive study in Christian anthropology. It does, however, set out to put before him the importance—the desperate, critical importance—of an approach without which writing about the "super-ego," social integration, and the rest of the terminology of modern psychology and sociology, offers no complete picture: an approach which is theological as well as political and historical.

Man needs more than social and individual integration: he needs a vision of that which can provide such integration: a vision, and an awareness, of a dimension which can give unity to his piecemeal analysis of his contemporary mood and institutions. Such analysis the theological approach requires; for though it has its obvious delimitations, it can do justice to this human situation only in so far as it takes cognisance of all the data which can be

assembled. Man needs, moreover, a sense of the "meaning" of his life. This meaning is an ultimate, which can be discovered only through knowledge and faith acting together; and until man has discovered meaning in his endeavour to build his institutions, in his trials and errors, in that complexity of streams which flow together to form his destiny, it is difficult to see how the frustrations and disasters which in his fear and unbelief he believes to be imminent can be banished.

The present post-Renaissance period of history may end in moral, spiritual, and material disaster. If that happens, history will have been a catastrophic experiment. There is, however, no reason why this should necessarily be the end. It is for the man of the twentieth century to decide. His opportunity is in the present. It may not come again.

February, 1946.

PART ONE

HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

BOOK ONE—HISTORY

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN HISTORY

I

IN the summer of 1936 I paid a visit to Heidelberg. The picturesque town, entered by a fifteenth-century bridge across the Neckar, and dominated by the ruined red sandstone castle which is far more beautiful as a ruin than the plans lead one to believe it had been before its partial destruction by invading French armies, was typically "romantisch" in the German way. Tourists were being led in crowds through the streets and the castle grounds; large *Kraft durch Freude* parties made it difficult to separate one group of tourists from another on their way to inspect the largest wine-vat in the world; and above the castle, commanding a fine view of it and of the thickly-wooded hills across the river, stood an expensive café whose prices must have reached their high level chiefly through the large influx, a few years before, of students and visitors from America. The university is the oldest in Germany, and the most famous. In addition to the older parts there is a new, pale-grey building, erected through the generosity of an American ambassador, above the entrance of which is the inscription *Dem Deutschen Geiste* ("to the German spirit"). Until the Nazi revolution of 1933 it had read *Dem Menschlichen Geiste* ("to the human spirit"). That alteration is an indication of the change of outlook which the Germany of the Third Reich had undergone. About ten days before the outbreak of the war I was staying with an old friend in one of the western suburbs of Berlin. I discussed several political questions with him and a friend of his who, like himself, was a lawyer, both of them being doctors of law. When I criticized the German action in invading Czechoslovakia I was told that this was inevitable and justifiable because the Czech republic was a danger to Germany, especially because of the Soviet aerodromes which the Reich considered a great menace. When I suggested that the only people who had ever seen the aerodromes were German journalists, my statement was received with loud laughter. Russia was a danger to European civilization, and so on, and in particular to the national existence of Germany. On the following morning the newspapers announced the Berlin-Moscow pact in enormous headlines. My friend was full of glee. Apparently the Russian menace had completely disappeared overnight, and the Soviet leaders were fully forgiven for having built their aerodromes, and all the anti-Russian fury of the last six and a half years had been forgotten.

I have mentioned these because they help to illustrate the fact that the major European problem of the first half of the twentieth century is the German problem: that of a gifted, restless, dynamic, yet politically backward people. At a time when the greatest need is for the extension of the field in which the

human spirit can operate, the Germans exclude all but the German spirit; and in matters such as the regulation of the relations between countries through agreed respect for international law and order, honesty of public utterance, and consistency of policy, the *volte face* of the Moscow pact came as a brutal reminder that until an advance takes place in the German political mentality peace in Europe and civilized development for all will be no more than remote, impracticable ideals.

For the German problem is the European problem. Without the unpredictable, incalculable, and explosive behaviour of the German nation, under no matter what rulers (the majority of the late German government were not Prussians), the persecution mania (expressed in genuine or assumed fear of encirclement), the curious pan-German race-mysticism which seems to appeal so powerfully to the German imagination, peace would be attainable, and Europe would not be faced every quarter of a century or so with gigantic cataclysms. No other nation is to such an extent preoccupied with problems of national destiny, brooding over this destiny as though history and geography had somehow conspired to force Germany into a position of eternal inferiority. It is hard, for example, to conceive of anyone but a German professor, after surveying the political and economic condition of Germany, declaring that "from these natural foundations there results an international policy which is a *cosmic union of freedom and destiny*,"¹ a mystical form of political thinking which is completely alien to the Western European mind. And if one is even prepared to revise one's opinion about Germany's sole responsibility for the first Great War, one cannot help feeling that there is a typically German self-righteousness in the judgment of so reputable a historian as Professor Hans Delbrück when he asserts that the first World War was deliberately planned and precipitated by France and Russia. But Delbrück, though belonging to the nation which produced Mommsen and Ranke and Eduard Meyer, was also the successor of Treitschke in the chair of history at Berlin University. But German inventiveness is not limited to the conclusion that the first World War was forced on Germany; the National Socialists, as is well known, went even further and fabricated the legend that she did not lose it but was "stabbed in the back" by Jews and Socialists. And so eminent a jurist as Professor Carl Schmitt has attributed the defeat of Germany in 1918 not to inferiority in military skill or equipment or numbers or to any of the other factors usually contributory to military defeat, but to the inner weakness arising from the conflict between the conceptions of *Soldatenstaat* and *Bürgerstaat*. During the period following the uniting of the Reich by Bismarck, he contends, the rise of liberalism and constitutionalism virtually made impossible the union of the military and political aspects of the state in one authority capable of giving leadership in times of peace and of war. This division of responsibility, the antithetical separation of the military from the political,² had for its consequence the fact that Germany entered the first World War "politically leaderless." For the concepts of "soldier

¹ Prof. Ernst Jäckh, *Deutsche Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, in the symposium *Deutschland : Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Berlin, 1930. Jäckh was formerly president of the Hochschule für Politik.

² *Staatsgefüge und Zusammenbruch des Zweiten Reiches*, Hamburg, 1934: "die sachwidrige Auseinandersetzung des Politischen und des Militärischen."

and liberal bourgeois, Prussian army and civil society, are antitheses of *Weltanschauung*, spiritual and moral education, juridical thought, and above all of the fundamental presuppositions of the structure and organization of the state."¹ For the essence of the political is totality, and in totality alone is strength to be found. The liberal-democratic ideal is the leaderless state; hence the disaster of 1918, when constitutional government reached the "zero-point of the will to political leadership."²

It was Hindenburg who recalled Germany to the Prussian and soldierly conception of the state by appointing as Chancellor a soldier, Adolf Hitler, thus restoring the lost unity of leadership and administration. Schmitt, therefore, sees in the growth of liberal democracy and constitutional opposition to the Prussian idea of the state the chief reason for the collapse of Germany in 1918. It is, however, hardly necessary to point out that in 1914 the initiative lay with the General Staff, that the Reichstag was solidly behind it, and that in the war of 1939-45, when Germany possessed single leadership and the internal contradictions had been ruthlessly overcome, she was again defeated. But the significance of Carl Schmitt's contention should not be missed. Military leadership, he holds, belongs to the essence of the Prussian conception of the state, and it is this conception alone which will enable Germany to fulfil her political destiny; for there are open to her only three alternatives: a final victory of one side or other in the conflict between the civilian-state and the soldier-state; decline to such a position of political unimportance that the internal divisions do not matter; with the consequent abandonment of her historical task; or a final disappearance into a heroic twilight in the full knowledge of her lost position.³ The only alternatives which matter, however, are the first and the third. History has, for the time being, decided which it had to be; but the problem for Europe still remains if the political attitude represented by Carl Schmitt is a permanent one; and it was this, and not only the emotional appeal of National Socialism, which succeeded in winning the support for the Third Reich of men trained in political economy, history, and law.

The German problem, however, though the chief political-historical problem of the last hundred years, is, in a sense, only an instance of the political problem as such. The impact of Germany on Western civilization, both in greatness and in decline, has been tremendous; it forces us, now we have survived the colossal struggle for the waging of which the great gifts of the German people had been commandeered and organized, to ask: Why do cataclysms of this kind afflict nations? Why is progress hindered by such volcanic outbursts, especially in times of enlightenment, when the penalties of war are greater and its results more meagre for the victors than in any other period of history? Is the "German problem" likely to be replaced by the "Russian problem," as at the moment seems probable? Why was a war fought against totalitarianism little more, as now appears to be the case, than a stage in the process of the extension of such forms of government over considerable areas of Europe? Is such a convulsion comparable with a

¹ Ibid., p. 13.

² Ibid., p. 49.

³ Ibid., p. 37.

volcanic eruption which is inevitable as long as the earth is still in an unfinished state, as uncontrollable, destructive, and, in view of the devastation wrought, as futile? If so, is there any point in passing moral judgments upon it? Can history, theology, and philosophy throw any light upon it, and upon the whole question of the nature and the purpose of the historical process, or is the latter entirely without meaning? and if history itself has no meaning, why then "is" it at all? How can history and politics, which is a human activity giving direction to history, be redeemed, so as to cease being a kind of tragic drama without form and the sense of satisfaction which that form provides? These questions are of vital importance to any attempt at understanding the life of this or any other time, and the kind of answer given to them should determine one's attitude towards the future as well as to the present.

The Christian in particular cannot escape the obligation to ask questions about the meaning of the things that have happened and are happening in the contemporary world, searching in them for some indication that "all things work together for good," and yet baffled by the confused, meaningless scene which he sees spread out before him. If the tragedies of history, such as great wars, are to continue until the end of time, human striving becomes useless; on the other hand, if they are to be regarded as lessons from which man learns to appreciate the need to reform his ways, the answer is that past history has *not* taught him to be wiser in the present. A shattering defeat in 1918 has not prevented Germany from waging war again within less than a quarter of a century. A later generation does not seem to profit by the mistakes of an earlier one because it has no personal responsibility for the mistakes. Further, no interpretation of history has yet been, or can be, offered, which is able to provide an incontestable explanation of the march of events or of the destination towards which they are moving; yet the process, one feels, must have some meaning; it must produce qualities or moments or movements which have some ulterior significance if it could but be grasped. The amazing creations of the imagination of man: art, letters, music; his search for scientific truth; his philosophic investigation into the nature of life and knowledge; his times of mystical rapture when he believes himself to be aware of the breaking in of another world into his life; the achievements of organizers and statesmen; the tremendous advance in technical skill and knowledge; successful attempts to discover the secrets of nature; the unearthing of ancient civilizations and the transmission of cultural factors in every generation, until the world seems to grow smaller with each decade: all these and a multitude of other things compel one to exclaim: Surely they are not just accidents, haphazardly emerging from an unplanned and unorganized conflict of forces, in Bertrand Russell's phrase, a "concatenation of atoms." They must be there for some reason. Yet no reason has been discovered; the best that can be done is to take certain assumptions and see how far what is known of life is consistent with them.

The philosopher has before him the difficult task of offering to the contemporary world an intelligent commentary on the process, or succession of events, which is called history, even if he cannot give a final and satisfactory explanation of it. He observes the failures and tragedies of history; he notes that the Kingdom of God is no nearer realization now than in the year 40.

He sees that sin is as deeply rooted in human life as ever, and believes that not until the individual is redeemed from it will world-society be anything more than an agglomeration of independent states, all compelled, because they are states, to safeguard their own interests and to seek their self-preservation. If he is honest, he will not try to hide behind a superficial optimism which deems the world to be all right because God is bound, somehow or other, to see it through; nor will he make any attempt to picture a delightful Golden Age in the future in which the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. Such an idyllic vision of pastoral peace is not justified by the violent, uncontrolled passions of nations, and is nothing more than a piece of arcadian fancy, pleasing, perhaps, to the imagination, attractive to anyone who wishes to find refuge from the sombre colours of the world as it is, but not by any means a vision of what some might hope to be the triumphant culmination of history after its passion-torn progress through time. It may be that history has no *ultimate* purpose; on the contrary, whatever purpose it may conceal may be unfolded in the present, through the emergence and conservation of values which are alone capable of indicating the meaning discoverable in the historical movement.

It is easy enough to say: if all nations were Christian, or even reasonable, there would be no wars, the Kingdom of God would be truly in our midst, and the problems presented by history would be solved. When Europe was (nominally) Christian there were wars; and even if one can imagine the great Eastern nations providing congenial ground for the spread of Christianity, one cannot imagine this expansion taking place in anything less than a period of time counted in centuries. In the meantime a great non-Christian nation such as Japan and an ex-Christian nation such as Germany have been both practising, and have been doing so for some considerable time, foreign policies which are remarkably similar in character and are the consequences of the same kind of mentality. The world cannot wait for the Christianization of Japan and the re-Christianization of Germany and Russia and Britain in order to achieve a peaceful condition of life. Religion has several purposes to fulfil, but one of them is not the *immediate* change in national character and the sudden conversion of hundreds of millions of people from an attitude of ruthless aggression to what the New Testament calls *agape* (love). It is so improbable as to be for all practical purposes impossible. And while the Christian may be convinced in his own mind that Christian morality alone can so transform men and nations as to put a check on the machinations of the "natural man," his conviction is not shared by many, and in the meantime "something has to be done" to redirect the forces which drive nations on their courses. One cannot just wait for the Kingdom of God or a political Utopia to come down from Heaven. At present, and for some time to come, it is through political means that restraint will be put upon nations and something approaching a world-community formed, and to that extent politics may be an instrument of the Kingdom of God in its worldly aspect. Kant's plan for perpetual peace, like the Covenant of the League of Nations, was based on reason; not on any conscious religious principle. But it is not therefore, from the Christian point of view, any less commendable. The reign of law, as Dr. William Temple said on more than one occasion, is a necessary

precondition of the reign of love. A Christian Europe is inconceivable where there is a state of perpetual anarchy.

In the last analysis what matters in politics is motive; and morals can play a highly important part in the positive task of shaping motive and in the much more negative one of imposing restraint. The de-moralization of politics leads to sheer opportunism and to the exaltation of the state into the only final authority over human life. Indeed, where there is no other objective moral standard the state is the only institution which can claim to be regarded as embodying one at all. For Hegel the state was the truly Rational, for it was the self-revelation of the Rational Mind, and because it was rationality embodied in events, that is in history, it had the right to exercise absolute power over the individual, and whatever it did was right. There seems to be no other alternative conclusion to be drawn from Hegel's philosophy of the state. The moralist, however, faced with the tragic drama in which Europe has been engaged, and which was but a repetition of the large-scale harnessing of evil which has characterized much human enterprise since man's life began, believes that only when the policies of governments are related to the principle of right will there be any release from the unbearable tension which is afflicting the lives of individuals and the nations which they constitute.

The problem of history, then, is reflected in the present world situation, in what is happening in the East as well as here in the West, though it is in the West that the issue is sharpest for the European consciousness. It may be that leadership will pass from Europe to America or to the Far East; but up to now world-history has had its main dynamic in the European nations.

Each generation finds in the events and tendencies of its own time the crystallization of the problem of history; each generation, therefore, if it attacks the problem at all, does so in terms of the prevailing forms of philosophic and religious thought. Until the nineteenth century there was no such thing as a philosophy of history, for there was no "world-historical" outlook, and the historical sense was late in developing. Early Christian theology knew nothing of it, though something of the kind was unconsciously implied in Jewish and early Christian eschatology;¹ but the eschatological mood did not last long, for it was defeated by the course of historical events. Origen and the other great eastern theologians did not deal with the problem of history, for they were not historically minded; and Augustine, receiving the severe shock shared by his contemporaries when Rome was sacked in 410, had little conception of history as a problem either for theology or philosophy. Only when man's awareness of the world as a whole became clear was it possible to approach history as a process presenting enigmas and problems; and the way one answers the problems depends, clearly, upon one's own philosophical and religious outlook. Given the same data, the German's method of approach would differ from the Englishman's, the Frenchman's from the Indian's, the atheist's from the theist's. For some it might be an empirical problem, a sort of exercise marred by mistakes, in the achievement of world federation or union; for others it might present itself as a scene or process designed for the purpose of enabling man to work out his own salvation

¹ The conception of "last things"; i.e., the consummation of a historical period through divine or Messianic intervention (Gk. "*eschatos*," last).

under God; for others it may be a "tale told by an idiot" with no significance. For all it is a problem involving the destiny of the human race, and it is the race which makes its own history. The "redemption" of history is a task additional to the redemption of the individual: ultimately it can only come through a society, or societies, of redeemed individuals.

The problem of history, then, is an extension of the general religious problem of redemption, and is therefore of especial interest to anyone whose approach to the questions of the age is Christian. There can, of course, be no immediate solution of the questions which history sets, nor, at the moment, can answers to the questions which arise from it be other than theoretical; but it is not beyond human reason and analysis to single out certain principles as they emerge from one's examination of the human scene, to perceive the significance of certain values, and to disentangle the forces at work in history, relating them to the religion of the New Testament and to the political morality which derives from it.

The forces which contribute to historical "movement" are complex. They include the growth of cultures and their expansion and stabilization into civilization; the contacts of civilizations with one another through trade, conquest, the exchange of ideas and familiarity with each other's literature and institutions; social and political changes due to such movements as the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, and the emergence of what Mr. Lewis Mumford has described as the "neotechnic" age; changes due to upheavals such as the French and Russian Revolutions, the great wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45; to migrations, to the impact of the West upon the East; to the influence of the time-space factor in discovery and invention; the consequences of religious movements as bearers of cultural values and social ideas; to religious persecution, which was a determining factor in the colonization of America; to the sense of nationality; and to the effects of climate and geography. With the exception of the last two, there lie behind these factors the decisions and actions of human wills, and these, in turn, are the result of some social or individual need or of an idea springing from or implanted in the minds of persons. Two major causes of historical change will be dealt with in the following chapters: politics and ethics; for it is these two forms of change which are most conspicuous in the twentieth-century world. Geographical factors have already played their part in the formation of civilizations, though they are not yet exhausted, as Japanese expansionism indicates; but by the beginning of the century the civilizations of the East had been brought into the ambit of the West through commerce and diplomacy; before that time the preconditions of world-history were present, by which is meant the growing sense of unity and interdependence among nations; but the two major factors of politics and ethics are still in a state of fluidity. Politics have not yet been rescued from organized self-interest, and there is no sense of organic unity which has its origin in any common and universal ethical system. Until politics are so transformed that they cease to be an instrument of diabolism there can be little hope of the evolution of history along melioristic lines. If at one time the exercise of force was an inevitable necessity and an integral factor in the transmission of cultures and the struggle for land and rights, it is so no longer, at any rate in the West, for it can decide

nothing that cannot be decided better by reason and negotiation. Such events as the battles of Tours, Lepanto, and Vienna, fought against the inundating Moslem powers of the Near East, can no longer be regarded as likely to recur, for wars between rival religious faiths have ceased with the cooling down of religious enthusiasm. Those battles were historic events of great significance and played a determining part in the clash of cultures and civilizations. But since those times the idea of international solidarity has arisen, and many instances are at hand of the peaceful settlement of disputes by friendly agreement or arbitration.¹ As whatever need there was in the past for the settlement of disputes by force has now disappeared, the future development of international relations, once barbarism in the West has received a decisive blow, will take the form of negotiated solution. Unfortunately it is still true, as Dr. Grant Robertson said of Bismarck's decision to go to war in 1866, that "when a strong state is determined to find in war a solution of political difficulties and will accept no other solution, war will result, however unwilling other states may be to go to war."² The events of 1939 are a sufficient proof of the truth of this statement, and the reason for these events, at any rate in Europe, is not lack of *Lebensraum*,³ ignorance of world conditions, the absence of other means of arriving at an agreement with a difficult neighbour, but sheer amoralism—Machiavellianism—in political aims and methods and the survival, in an age which should know better, and in which international co-operation should be an easily achievable reality, of a mentality which is several generations behind the requirements of the times. The present historical situation, then, compels one to inquire with a sense of deep anxiety and urgency into the meaning of history, for we are forced to see in it the end of things as they were, though it is too soon to read into it a prevision of the Shape of Things to Come.

CHAPTER II

THE QUEST FOR MEANING IN HISTORY

I

IN the Epilogue to *War and Peace* Tolstoy, having written his spacious novel about the great panorama of the Napoleonic wars, searches for something which can provide a clue to the meaning of history and the forces which set it in motion. After observing that two of the major factors in history are genius and chance in combination, each of which is in itself undefinable, he seems to abandon the attempt, concluding later that it is power which activates historical movements, but that power, again, is imponderable and incapable

¹ See C. R. M. Cruttwell, *A History of Peaceful Change*, Oxford, 1937.

² C. Grant Robertson, *Bismarck*, p. 193.

³ Kagawa appears to reject the idea that Japan is lacking in *Lebensraum*. In 1931 he indicated that there was plenty of room in the northern island of Hokkaido for immigration, and that the southern half of Sakhalin had three hundred thousand acres capable of colonization. "The reason why the Japanese do not go in and occupy such lands is because they lack the willingness to endure privations." (*Meditations on the Cross*, E. Tr., S.C.M. Press, 1932, p. 217.)

of exact definition. In one passage, however, Tolstoy seems to suggest that there is something bigger than the power-relation between the human actors in the drama of history, for, commenting upon the end of Napoleon's career in words reminiscent of Thomas Hardy, he says:

The Dispenser of all had ended the drama and stripped the chief actor of his motley, so that he stood revealed to the world.

"Look," said the Dispenser. "This is he in whom you have believed. There he stands. See you know that it was not he, but I, who moved you."

Yet on the whole Tolstoy, who was deeply perplexed both as a Christian and as a great creative artist, about the problems of the meaning and mechanism of history, is ultimately unable to find any satisfactory solution to them. "Experience teaches us that every historical event is bound up with the will of one or more persons who issued orders," that is with the question of freedom, to which he gives some attention; but as he looks at the events of history and their incalculable consequences he decides that these consequences are far vaster than the initial impulse would warrant. The decisions of men, their contacts and interrelationships, their personalities, are not commensurable in the totality of their operations with the consequences to Europe of the Napoleonic wars. Therefore, Tolstoy says,

only to an expression of the will of the Deity (who is independent of time) can a series of events covering several years or centuries be attributed, and only to Deity (who is stirred to action by no temporal agency) does it belong to direct, by His will alone, a movement of humanity.

To-day, surveying a scene which is far vaster and many times more confused, in which conflicts have been fiercer and more radical, we are again tempted to ask questions about the meaning, if any, which history should possess; for the present is one of those moments when colossal things are at stake, and one of two ways of life is destined to be doomed. This conflict is one which to some future Tolstoy will no doubt present clearer issues than the Napoleonic Wars, such as the conflict between democracy and tyranny, variety and uniformity, freedom and slavery, civilised values and nihilism. Yet basically the problems which it raises are the same: what is the character of these great devastating, demonic movements, and what principles, if any, are seen to emerge from them? What function has politics as an instrument in the realization of whatever purpose there may be behind history and the movements of civilizations?

For, in considering the forces which involve nations in their gigantic movements we are compelled to face a fundamental problem: the endeavour to find meaning or sense in history, to see in what is happening in our own time not only a challenge to the rational order of the world but something which can be interpreted as having some place in that order, paradoxical though this may sound. When Hitler spoke of laying the foundations of German history for the next thousand years he was forecasting something which was to become perilously near to realization. From his own point of view, as one whom Hegel would include in the category of individuals of "world-historical" importance, Hitler was embodying a tremendously significant historical movement. Since then a counter-moment has arrived in which

the democracies challenged the right of Germany violently to twist the direction of history and to change it into "German" history; for it is certain that, had Germany won the war, "national" history as it has been hitherto known would cease to exist. There would only be the history of Germany to which final form had been given, that is, static history, the organization of civilization into a universal state, which Professor Toynbee, in his massive *Study of History*, has shown to be the last, though not necessarily a brief, stage, in the life of civilizations, the final phase which spells decay and eclipse.

Now, those who believe in freedom, or the rights of man, and in civilized values, are convinced that democracy has the greatest potentiality for good and is alone capable of safeguarding the continuity of the civilized life. Democracy has assumed a new significance because the destinies of nations are bound up with its vitality, for more than ever the fate of civilization depends upon whether democracy is capable of survival, upon whether the democratic way of life can be regenerated so that a rational order of international life may be reborn out of the present anarchy. It would be an irretrievable disaster were it not able to fulfil its historical function. Yet the very facts that it has been gravely threatened and that democrats are being compelled to re-examine the basis of their political faith, oblige us to ask, as Tolstoy did, what is the meaning of history, and what is the nature of the forces which actuate it.

2

There have been several attempts during the modern period to find shape and purpose in history. In the work to which reference has just been made Professor Toynbee has pointed out that of the twenty-one known civilizations all but seven have perished. Some withered away, some collapsed in the face of armed opposition, others, belonging to the "arrested" type, failed to reach maturity, others, such as the Maya civilization of Central America, appear to have perished through the encroachment of the jungle which could not be mastered because of the lack of technical machinery. It is, perhaps, facts such as these, even more than the great world struggles, which make one reflect upon the apparent senselessness of history, and cause one to wonder if the whole process is haphazard and dynamised by chaotic rather than orderly forces. Dr. Toynbee claims to be able to provide explanations of the geneses of civilizations in terms of challenge-and-response; but this does not explain the purpose of the process: only its mechanics. As a philosophical historian he appears to favour the somewhat pessimistic conclusion that Western civilization has reached a period corresponding to the final stages of previous civilizations when the creative forces were exhausted, the proletariat rose to a position of authority in the State, the influence of the "marches" was predominant, and the inauguration of "universal states" marked the last age in the evolution of civilizations. As a Christian he finds the solution to the problem of history in the concept of the Kingdom of God, the penetration of the temporal by the eternal, and the impact of another dimension upon the dimension of this world. He believes the present age, in which industrialism

and democracy are combined, to hold dangerous possibilities for the future course of civilization. Western civilization, he believes with Spengler and Berdyaev, has in many ways ceased to be in the highest sense creative.

Another considerable, though more schematized, examination of the tendencies and forms of civilizations is Spengler's *Decline of the West*, in which a painstaking analysis is made of the great rhythms of history, though it offers no guide to anyone who is eager to discover the meaning and purpose (if any) which history may disclose. Rather is it a contribution to the study of the decline and fall of civilizations and cultures. As its title indicates, the *Decline of the West*¹ is an expression of deep pessimism, for "world-history" (not as a purposive unity but rather as the totality, or plurality, of separate cultures) has no discoverable meaning: each culture is complete in itself, having its own form and characteristics which can be seen to re-occur in the corresponding periods of other cultures, the last stage of which is petrification in the form of civilization. That history has no meaning is illustrated, in Spengler's view, by the meaningless destruction of Central American civilization by the Conquistadors and in the irrelevance of that civilization to any other. There is neither sense nor purpose exhibited in the rise and fall of such a society.

Spengler concludes that the present phase of history, that which is conditioned by economic and imperialistic expansionist policy, represents the Winter of the western or Faustian culture, and that just as previous culture-periods have performed the cycle of existence, so also will the Faustian, which would appear to be the last phase of historical change. There is, therefore, for Spengler, no such thing as universal history; there can be no progressive movement forward because each culture is limited to its own morphological scheme, which has to obey a kind of fatalistic inevitability. Faced with the exhaustion of creativeness, Spengler urges the men of this generation to become technicians and men of action rather than poets or philosophers, for the latter have no place in this last phase of Western civilization.² Spengler's position leads to extreme philosophic relativism. For him there are no eternal truths: the philosophy of any age is only for its own age, its thought being valid only for the particular age and culture which have produced it. This denial of the universality of values has had far-reaching effects on modern German thought especially on the National Socialist philosophy as expounded by Rosenberg and Hitler, who echoes Spengler's denial of the universality of cultural values:

The possessions of a State cannot be valued according to its spiritual eminence or to its position of power in relation to the framework of the rest of the world, but only according to the value they possess for that particular *Volkstum*.³

For different reasons the distinguished philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev shares Spengler's pessimism. He too believes that the modern and post-modern periods are exhausted, and that the human image has disintegrated. Such disintegration he attributes to the crisis to which humanism has led, that is to the essential irreligiousness of the modern man. The "radical failure of

¹ "Downfall" is a more correct translation of the German *Untergang* than "decline."

² *The Decline of the West*, I, 40 *passim*, 363 (Allen and Unwin, E. Tr.)

³ *Mein Kampf*, II, p. 435.

the historical process" he attributes to the failure to realize the Kingdom of God. "Man's self-affirmation leads to his perdition: the free play of human forces unconnected with any higher aim brings about the exhaustion of man's creative powers."¹

Humanism leads to anti-humanism, the culmination of the process being exemplified in Marx and Nietzsche. The typical symbol of the age is the machine, that which stands for disincarnation, the tyranny of the material over the spiritual, of necessity over freedom. For it is in the realization of freedom, and particularly freedom in the Christian sense, that Berdyaev conceives history as having meaning. He betrays none of the pessimistic fatalism of Spengler, although he is pessimistic to the extent that he sees the historical process failing because man does not win for himself the spiritual freedom which is his rightful heritage. History, he says, can only be understood and interpreted in terms of a metaphysic of history: its purpose, in a word, is to lead man to a life which is beyond this one. "The goal of historical knowledge and philosophy is not natural but supernatural. For just as there exists an after life in relation to individual life, so the great historical paths led us to such a world."

Berdyaev approaches the philosophy of history from a theoretical standpoint: he does not base his conclusions about the future on any concrete data but maintains them as an act of faith. Yet, like Toynbee and Spengler, though in a wholly different way, he sees in the historical process a rhythm of rise and fall. The Renaissance saw the liberation of great creative energies, but its main consequence was the separation of the divine and the human, the increasing autonomy of the various aspects of culture. There is a logic in historical development which shows that if man separates himself from the divine source of his being his life in society will decay and disintegrate.²

Like Dr. Toynbee, Berdyaev sees in the Kingdom of God that which is alone able to bring meaning into the historical scene; yet the Kingdom is not a this-worldly Utopia, but a complete breach with the present order; man is by himself impotent to redeem the historical process, for its redemption lies beyond time. This, however, does not prevent him from aiming at the realization of freedom, which is to be found in its richest form in Christianity.³

3

In our attempt to deal with the problems of civilization and politics and with the interpretation of history we should bear in mind three ways in which the word "history" is used. There is history as event, as chronicle, pure historiography; there is history regarded as process, out of which certain values are seen to emerge, exemplified in a work such as Mr. Lionel Curtis' *Civitas Dei*; and there is history as interpretation, something which has meaning,

¹ *The Meaning of History*, pp. 198, 142 (Bles, 1936).

² For a fuller account of Berdyaev's Philosophy of History see below, Pt. II, Bk. II, Chap. IV.

³ For a development of this type of thought I would refer the reader to the volume *The Kingdom of God and History* in the series *Church Community and State* (Allen and Unwin), where the Christian theology of history approaches the question of history, time, and eternity, and the Kingdom of God from various angles.

in which the key can be found to the whole process of human life. This three-fold division resembles Hegel's three types of history: Original, Reflective, and Philosophical; and as Hegel's contribution to the understanding of history was one of the earliest and most systematic, it may be considered here as a preliminary statement of the problem of history in relation to the question of "universal history"; for though Hegel endeavours to fit history into his own philosophical system he does attempt to see it as a whole, as a purposive movement, towards which the four main civilizations have made their contribution.

Hegel's view is of history as instrumental, as a means for the realization of a certain end, namely, what he understands as Freedom, which will be achieved through the gradual self-revelation of spirit. The *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, delivered in Berlin during the years 1822-31, can be regarded as one of the greatest efforts to grasp the significance of history, for in them Hegel, from the standpoint of philosophy, sees in its progress a directed movement *sub specie aeternitatis*. His thought presents several difficulties and contradictions, as we shall see presently; but with all its faults and peculiarities it is the answer of a great philosopher to the question of the meaning of history.

Universal history (*Weltgeschichte*), according to Hegel, is first and foremost the stage on which Spirit displays itself in its most concrete reality, fulfilling and realizing itself. The history of the world begins with a general aim: the realization of the idea of Spirit through freedom. In Hegel's opinion the Eastern nations knew that *one* is free, the Greek and Roman world that *some* are free, and the Germanic-Christian world that *all* are free. Through the gradual awareness of the expansion of the sphere in which freedom is operative the purpose of Spirit becomes embodied in the historical process: No conscious aim can be said to characterize the beginning of history: only an implicit one, which is rendered conscious by the development of historical movement. Individuals, nations, the passions, interests, and instincts of which they are constituted, are but the instruments of a higher and broader purpose of which they know nothing. The immediate agents in this process of development are the heroes, the outstanding personalities, who are also the instruments of the unfolding will and are unconscious of the aims which they are unfolding, while at the same time prosecuting their own aims. Their actions have no absolute or ultimate value, for they are relative only to their own time: they discover the stage of Truth immediately necessary for their own age.¹

It is through the activities of great men the World-Spirit realizes itself, moving towards the next stage in its self-development. Hegel appears thus to identify the wills of historical figures as in some way with the carrying out of the intentions of the World-Spirit, though at the same time regarding their deeds as the result of their free acts of self-determination within the limits imposed by the spirit of their age. Human beings are but the instruments of the process, means to an end, subordinate to the purpose of which history

¹ *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, E. Tr., p. 31. "It was theirs to know this nascent principle; the necessary directly sequent step in progress which their world was to take. . . . World-historical men—the heroes of an epoch—must, therefore, be recognized by the clear-sighted ones: *their deeds, their words are the best of that time.*"

is the agent; and Hegel seems to see that this is scarcely just to any conception of human nature which gives man worth in his own right. The subjective element in men, however, their interests and views and judgments, must be considered: therefore they must be thought of as formally free and capable of self-determination, able to choose between good and evil. Still, no complaints must be made about the fate experienced in history by virtue, morality, and piety; these are, so to speak, casualties which fall by the wayside, belonging to the subjective order and not very necessary to the general purpose of history. Still, the world as it ought to be is truly good, and into the nature of this world it is philosophy which gives an insight; further, this "good" is not an abstraction but a "vital principle capable of realizing itself. This Good, this Reason, in its most concrete form, is God. God governs the world; the actual working of his government—the carrying out of his plan—is the History of the world."¹ The task of philosophy is to comprehend what this plan is, to discover the "real side of the divine idea." In order to realize its plan, this World-Spirit uses personal existences in whom reason is present.

The state, Hegel concludes, is the sphere in which the self-realization of Spirit in terms of Freedom is found:² Law, Morality, and Government are modes of operation in which such Freedom is achieved, and these receive their sanction in the State, which is the expression of the Universal: that is, the union of subjective and objective wills.³ It is through the State that historical changes take place, and different political principles are manifestations of the successive phases of the idea of the Spirit in its self-expression and self-realization.⁴ Real freedom can exist only where individuality is grounded in God; the State, therefore, "rests on religion."⁵

Now the State is an organization of the people or nation who share its laws, its natural features, its history; and each people has its own particular spirit⁶ which contributes to the process of historical advance. The "national spirits" of history are constituted by the particular moral life of peoples, their governments, art, religion, science; that is, their culture. To realize these "grades," to become embodied in their cultures, and at the same time making them its instruments, is the purpose of the World-Spirit.⁷

Hegel now considers the course of world-history, which is the "development of the consciousness of Freedom on the part of the Spirit,"⁸ and this, as has been said, makes use of world-historical figures who provide the dynamic of history. Such individuals are in a category by themselves and must not be

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73 ("Gott regiert die Welt—der Inhalt seiner Regierung, die Vollführung seines Planes, ist die Weltgeschichte." "Die Weltgeschichte ist die Darstellung des gottlichen, absoluten Prozesses des Geistes in seinen höchsten Gestalten." *Werke*, ed. Lasson, VIII, pp. 55, 58).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

³ "The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth. We have in it, therefore, the object of History in a more definite shape than before; that in which Freedom obtains objectivity and lives in the enjoyment of this objectivity" (p. 41).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶ It is doubtful if Hegel uses the word *Geist* in this connection in the same sense as in the rest of the book and in his *Philosophie des Geistes*; rather, perhaps, in the sense of "genius."

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁸ "Der Fortschritt im Bewusstsein der Freiheit."

judged by ordinary moral standards. He enunciates the dangerous doctrine that

"moral claims are irrelevant and must not be brought into collision with world-historical deeds and their accomplishments. The Litany of private virtues—modesty, humility, philanthropy, and forbearance—must not be raised above them."¹

Just as there are individuals whose lives are significant for the histories of peoples, so there are peoples who are destined to play leading roles in world-history, which is the development of Spirit in Time, just as Nature has its development in Space.² After painting an eloquent picture of the multitude of forces at work in history, Hegel comments that the category observed in this "restless mutation of individuals and peoples" is that of change. Hence the essence of Spirit is activity, and creativeness. Broadly speaking, change on the large scale covers the period from childhood to maturity. Oriental history represents the childhood of history, Greek civilization its youth, Roman its manhood, and in Germanic-Christian civilization it reaches its maturity, for it is this, the fourth period, in which the "spirits" and achievements of the Hellenic world are consummated, which realizes the ideal of Freedom in its fullest form. Each people has its "spirit," which is grasped by reason, much as for Spengler each culture has its own distinctive quality which is to be apprehended intuitively. The "new" spirit is that of self-determination, expressed most forcefully in the Reformation, which regards man as destined to be free.

Hegel's philosophy of history, then, can thus be briefly summarized. The purpose of World-history, that is the combined and interacting histories of civilizations, is the realization of Freedom. This is its end and the process leading towards it. The Spirit, in the philosophical sense, is the self-knowing, self-willing, absolute Idea. Such a philosophy of history has a grand sweep about it, and, when simplified and as far as possible freed from the more technical aspects of Hegel's system, is a valuable and dignified contribution to men's attempts to understand the nature and purpose of the complex and baffling process in which humanity is involved. Hegel's philosophy, however, presents certain difficulties. There is, first of all, his conception of Spirit (*Geist*), which, as he himself admits,³ is a kind of abstraction of an abstraction. Spirit, he says, is always Idea, but in the first place it is the concept of Idea, or the Idea in its most indefinite character (*Unbestimmtheit*), in the most abstract form of reality. But at the same time it must realize itself as subjective, objective, and absolute Spirit. Subjectively its aspects of self-realization are (a) anthropological, in terms of soul (*Seele*), (b) phenomenologically (as consciousness, self-consciousness, reason), and (c) psychologically. Spirit in its objective aspect seeks expression in the categories of (a) law (property, contract, right as contrasted with wrong); (b) morality; (c) social morality (*Sittlichkeit*) (the family, civil society, the state); as Absolute Spirit its manifestations are art, revealed religion, and philosophy. That is, Spirit has as the sphere of its manifestation the whole of human culture, which is the stuff of history. It is, in a word, the Absolute, which would appear to be a completely abstract con-

¹ Ibid. p. 70. This is reminiscent of Napoleon's belief that he stood above ordinary morality.

² Ibid. p. 75.

³ *Philosophie des Geistes*, Vol. vii of the *Werke*, ed. Gans, p. 33.

ception. As anything more than a philosophical expression it has no existence; for a distillation of abstraction cannot reveal itself or realize itself in anything, let alone in the concrete forms of historical experience. Hegel seems to be speaking about the bodying forth of something which has no reality outside his own thought; for his Absolute is without content, and though it is supposed to be manifested in the historical, it is difficult to see how Hegel visualized its expression in form-contents and in the definite phenomena of individual and social life. The problem which emerges from his philosophy of history is similar to the theological one of the relation between the Wholly Other, the Utterly Transcendental, and the Immanent God; but whereas theology postulates the Holy Spirit as a means of bridging the gulf, there is nothing in Hegel's system which can be said to correspond to it. Hegel therefore endeavours to give a more definite content to his Absolute by saying that its highest definition is not spirit by itself but at the same time the "self-revealing, self-conscious, incessantly creative spirit (*unendlich schöpferische Geist*)."¹ Although the third part of the *Encyklopädie* is a necessary prolegomenon both to the *Philosophy of Right* and to the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel creates a difficulty in not finding some method of crossing the gap separating the abstraction of his Absolute Idealism on the one hand and the definite ponderable realities of state with its organizations and history on the other. How, for example, can the Absolute achieve its self-realization in the state, which is after all in the last analysis little more than public right organized and sanctioned by force, and how can a form of political organization be the progress of God in the world? and how can the divine will be conceived of as "unfolding itself in the actual shape of the organized world"?² Hegel was faced with the problem of reconciling an abstract idea with the real world of daily existence. It was a difficult problem. Christian theology, assisted by mystical experience and an ancient Hebrew doctrine of spirit, was supported in its determination to solve the difficulty, and to justify the idea of the Word becoming Flesh by introducing the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, in which the Word actually participated in a biological act in order to be objectively realized in history. But Hegel was not able even to resort to a "myth" of this kind in order to relate his Absolute to history. It remains the abstract Absolute of a philosophical system.

A second difficulty of the Hegelian system is the belief that everything is, somehow, the manifestation of Spirit: but there is no moral differentiation between the categories which it uses in order to realize itself. All its modes are so to speak "equal," because they are the manifestation of the Absolute. History, as the *res gesta*, that which has happened, is not wholly good, though certain values, which can be described as good, emerge. But for Hegel history does not appear to discriminate between good and evil; Freedom, the ultimate end of history, is given no definite continent, apart from self-determination, which is not a moral quality at all by an activity of will.³

¹ *Phil. des Geistes*, p. 32.

² *Phil. des Rechts*, § 270.

³ For a more detailed account of certain aspects of the *Philosophie des Rechts* see the note on the Hegelian tradition in German political thought. Berdyaev's criticism is that Freedom as conceived by Hegel is independent of our freedom, and is not "for us" because of this absence of personal and moral content. Hegel's view of Spirit, he says, leads to conservative results, whereas Spirit is really revolutionary. (*Spirit and Reality*, p. 46.)

In fact the identification of Reality and Rationality ("The rational is the real, and the real is the rational"¹) would tend to minimise the differentiation between various categories of experience. If whatever *is* is rational (being the expression of the self-manifesting and self-realizing Spirit), whatever exists is as real as anything else, and as rational. This leads to the conclusion that moral distinctions, or qualitative distinction of any kind, are to be excluded, though Hegel himself would repudiate such a conclusion, for he does accept the categories of good and evil, though he is not as concerned about them as Kant. In fact the tendency of his political philosophy is to exclude them from politics, whereas Kant regarded them as essential. The Spirit, then, is to be regarded as objectifying itself in all the activities of the human mind and of institutions, for these are the constituent factors in the evolution and construction of the state, which is the fullest "incarnation" of Spirit. Hegel's glossing over the moral factor in history is further illustrated in his eagerness to put the state above all else, making it the ultimate arbiter in human affairs.

There is, however, much in Hegel's philosophy of history which commends itself. He was one of the first to see in history a movement demanding an explanation in terms of purpose. As a conception involving the self-expression of Spirit in time it possesses a certain magnificence and appeals to the imagination; and though he wrote as a philosopher and not as a historian, coming as he did after Gibbon and belonging to the beginning of the same century as Ranke and Mommsen, he occupied a distinguished place in the series of men whose life's work was to investigate and understand the forces secular and spiritual which have played a major part in the determination of the course of human life. He believed that history possessed a unity of its own if the principle underlying that unity could be discovered. That he interpreted history in the terms of his own philosophy, which in several respects had its dangers, is no condemnation of its purpose, but rather a reason for examining what truth there is in it. Followers of Hegel's, such as D. F. Strauss, applied his dialectic method to early Christian history, though with results not deserving of very serious consideration. Marxism, using a similar dialectic, and seeing in history a higher synthesis resulting from the interpenetration of opposites, represented the most forceful application of his method; philosophically dialectic materialism is the most potent example of Hegelian influence upon the thought of men whom Hegel would be the first to describe as of "world-historical" significance. It is unfortunate that his influence, when translated into political action, has made not for an increase in the freedom to which he allocated such an important position but has indirectly led to the erection of state-systems which have been conspicuous for their denial of it.

In the last resort, having exhausted the philosophical examination of history, Hegel feels himself obliged to see in it a process and a content to be understood in religious terms. "Indeed," he says, "this (the glorification of

¹ *Phil. des Rechts*, Vorrede, p. 17. "Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich, und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig."

God) is the most worthy purpose of Spirit and of History,"¹ and the closing paragraph of his great work amplifies the thought:

Only insight is able to reconcile Spirit with World-History and reality, so that that which has happened and is happening every day not only comes from God and cannot do so without God, but is essentially the work of God.

Hegel, then, saw in history a unity created by purpose and process, which justified him in speaking about world-history; and as this question of world-history is of some importance it is necessary at this juncture to give it some brief attention.

Hegel was not the first to deal with history as universal history: Voltaire had endeavoured to see in history a kind of universality, and Schiller, forty years before Hegel's famous lectures had been completed, was preoccupied, though in a lesser degree, with the problem of the importance of the study of universal history. In his inaugural lecture as Professor of History at Jena he took as his theme "What is Universal History, and why should one study it?" The historian, he said, "brings a rational purpose to bear upon the course of the world, and introduces a teleological principle into world-history."² But can one justifiably speak about history in this sense? Is there such a thing as "history" or only "histories"? That is, can one speak of "universal history" apart from the "histories" of cultures, nations, or periods? Is it true, as Professor John Macmurray has said, that "the idea of human progress is only possible if human history is conceived as a single action"? This question is further illustrated in a letter sent out by Lord Acton in 1898 to the contributors of the Cambridge Modern History:

"By universal history I understand that which is distinct from the combined history of all countries, which is not a rope of sand, but a continuous development; it is not a burden on the memory, but an illumination of the soul. It moves in a succession to which the nations are subsidiary. Their story will be told, not for their own sakes, but in reference and in subordination to a higher series, according to the time and degree in which they contribute to the common fortunes of mankind."

The question of the reality of universal history is one which cannot be fully answered until the process of history is complete; that is, it can never be answered because we do not know when it will be completed. Yet there is reason for asserting that "universal history," "world-history," is not an academic abstraction, but a unity towards which the events of our generation are driving the nations. History at any rate during the modern period, has always been more than the chronicling of the affairs of individual nations, for there have always been contacts between nations which, in spite of the efforts to achieve autarky, have stood in the way of complete insularity. A period in which all nations are easily plunged into global war is surely one which is entering upon the stage of universal history, when the history of the world can be regarded as a unity.

"Universal history" can be considered to have "arrived," too, when political and cultural ideas have become so diffused that they supply the

¹ "Die Verherrlichung Gottes ist . . . der würdigste Zweck des Geistes und der Geschichte." (Lasson, VIII, p. 164).

² Schiller, *Werke*, Stuttgart, 1860, vol. x, p. 354. Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des Nations* was published in 1769 and Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* in 1784.

common fund upon which all nations can draw. A world-unity animated by a common ideology, whether religious or political, would also be the sign of the universalizing of history. Another sign is the extensions throughout the world of the technical civilization of the West. This, far more than the dissemination of Christianity, is for some time to come likely to increase the interdependence of nations, especially if modern technics are to be subjected to some central control.

During the inter-war years increased technical facilities, organizations such as the International Labour Office and the League of Nations, the radio, and so on, should have contributed to the realization of world unity; but in point of fact this was prevented by the existence of diverse political systems, deeply-rooted national prejudices, the German problem, the Russian problem, the Japanese problem, and several other problems. The conflict of interests, and the whole complex of problems which divided the inter-war world, have produced a situation in which it must be seen more clearly than ever that peace is indivisible, and that the inter-dependence of nations is not a phrase mouthed by political moralists but a condition without which civilization cannot survive. In other words, the era of "universal" history has arrived; the era which will make it possible to assume that if history has any purpose at all, it must be to achieve organic wholeness out of present dissociation and anarchy.

The major psychological problem of modern civilization is that of mal-adjustments and tensions caused by the survival of obsolete ideas and patterns of behaviour into a world which cannot exist without a universalist outlook; the survival of the man with the wheel-barrow mind (to use Karl Mannheim's phrase) in the age of the aeroplane; of men with primitive passions in an age which cannot avoid being wrecked when these passions are released.

It is one of the curious paradoxes of history that war, the most demonic and destructive operation known to man, is instrumental in the production of a unity which peace was powerless to achieve.

Hegel believed that it was possible to think of history as a whole; modern experience shows that it is; and it is, paradoxically, through the consequences of the political philosophy of the nation which is most indebted to the Hegelian theory of the state and of history that the way to universal history is being prepared.¹

Indeed, academic theories or philosophies of history are not as theoretical as they might seem. Some of them have been most potent in the moulding of our age. The Marxist interpretation of history, for example, whatever its actual truth, is one of the most dynamic factors in the history of the twentieth century. It may or may not be the fact that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," but it is true that the philosophy behind the words has led to the establishment of a political institution whose historical significance is one of the major factors in modern political, economic, and social development. The materialistic conception of history, "the consistent extension of materialism to the domain of social phenomena," as Lenin called it, has had practical results the importance of which cannot yet be

¹ See note on the Hegelian tradition in German political philosophy.

fully appreciated. Lenin pointed out that, whereas pre-Marxist sociology and historiography gave an accumulation of facts at random, Marxism examines the totality of historical tendencies and co-ordinates them in one principle: the primacy of methods of production.¹

Marxism claims to examine history in its totality; it analyses the causes of the rise and fall of historical movements, and draws its conclusions from them. That, of course, is the method which must be adopted in any endeavour to disentangle the threads of history and to discover its meaning. The strength of Marxist communism lies in its provision of a strategy, the strategy of the Proletarian Revolution, by which its main theses cease being theories about history and become concrete economic and social realities. That, too, is where the ideas of Hegel and Spengler and the Nazi philosophers have more than academic interest, for National Socialism was the revolutionary vehicle of these ideas, the originator of the strategy by which they were to be carried out.

We see, then, that the philosophy of history, that is the interpretation of the past, the understanding of the present, and the forecast of the future as disclosing an end to be achieved (in the case of Germany the political domination of the German people, and of Russia the substitution of a proletarian for a bourgeois society) is not to be dismissed as pure theory and therefore as irrelevant to history *as that which happens*. The destinies of nations can be changed by ideas, provided those ideas are sufficiently powerful to appeal to those who are thought to be the ultimate benefactors by their translation into fact. Ideas, therefore, have the power to make a decisive impact on civilizations.

4

Democracy, while admitting that both nationalism and economic forces are important as factors in historical evolution, cannot accept the principle that they are the only determining factors. Yet if democracy is to play a determining part in shaping the future course of history, it must be capable of offering a philosophy of history which is something more than a sentimental defence of personal freedom. Viewing history as a totality, the democrat must be able to single out definite tendencies in the past and the major currents of the present, and offer an end or purpose which is desirable of achievement. He must offer a clue to the meaning of history, and also a political strategy capable of resulting in the empirical embodiment of his theoretic conclusions. Marxism and what for the sake of convenience may be called Germanism have resorted to force on principle in order to carry out

¹ "Marxism, pointed the way to a comprehensive, an all-embracing study of the rise, development, and decay of socio-economic structures. People make their own history; but what determines their motives, that is, the motives of people in the mass; what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and endeavours; what is the sum-total of all these clashes among the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions for the production of the material means of life that form the basis of all the historical activity of man; what is the law of the development of these conditions—to all these matters Marx directed attention, pointing out the way to a scientific study of history as a unified and true-to-law process despite its being extremely variegated and contradictory." V. I. Lenin, *The Teachings of Karl Marx*, p. 17.

their strategy. But democracy, with its faith in reason, cannot advocate force as the major element in its strategical technique. In fact, it looks rather as though democracy, lacking in the peculiar dynamic which characterized the German and Russian revolutions, cannot produce a strategy of any kind. It is always on the defensive, convinced of its own adequacy as a political philosophy, but nevertheless impotent to do more than indulge from time to time in its own self-vindication, and that, frequently, rather pathetically. Is there, then, any principle, any interpretation of history, which can, or could, if properly utilized, create the dynamic which is so desperately needed if it is to be effective?

The democratic interpretation of history is that it is the story of freedom and the expression in the lives of nations of the movement from force to persuasion. In spite of the great setbacks which this process has experienced, the democrat is confident that it is actually in existence as a historical reality, and not merely an abstract generalization or a wishful anticipation of what he would like to regard as real. To this story of freedom both nationalism, which has been perverted by Germanism, and the manipulation of the means of production, the importance of which has been exaggerated by Communism, can contribute, for the former represents variety in a world which was not intended to be uniform, and the latter a healthy emphasis on the need to exercise social control of the means of producing wealth in the interests of social justice through intelligent planning. Whereas each of these two other philosophies of history is exclusive and obsessed with the finality of its own truth, democracy, in perceiving the value that is in them is more generous and catholic in its outlook. Communism can learn from it the meaning of freedom, and nationalism the meaning of tolerance, and by offering the conceptions of free international association and personal liberty it is able to re-interpret the two great forces of the modern world which, because of their inherent demonic energy, have been the cause of the infliction of so much evil on men and women.

At the present moment the nations which are suffering from the practical results of the German philosophy of history are more concerned with the recovery of freedom than with anything else, and to those nations democracy is able to offer the hope of liberation and of liberty. It is therefore a historical force of major importance, destined to play a determining part in the history of nations, but it is unlikely that it will be able to do this as effectively as it should unless it is the embodiment of a definite conception of what history is, what civilization ought to be, and also in possession of the organized force which is necessary to overcome the onslaught of the powers which object to the democratic conception of life and are determined, if they can, to destroy it.

It is therefore of the utmost importance for believers in democracy to think out clearly a philosophy of freedom which can meet the demands of European reconstruction in the years which are to come. Unless they are certain that the mission of democracy is of supreme historical importance and not just a means of safeguarding individual liberty, it is doubtful whether, lacking the "dynamism" of which the totalitarian powers boasted, democracy will be able to commend itself as an alternative to the disorder which has

reigned in Europe during the latter years. If they are to be true to their conviction that history is the story of freedom, democrats must be prepared to show an intelligent appreciation of what freedom means and display in their advocacy of it some of the enthusiasm which has characterized the practical exposition of these other philosophies which we have outlined.

There are, fortunately, indications that those who believe in democracy are aware of its "world-historical" importance, e.g., the Atlantic Charter, President Roosevelt's Message to Congress, the British Labour Party's Manifesto on post-war reconstruction issued in February 1942. These expressions of intentions show that democracy has a conception of an ultimate end the realization of which is in harmony with what democrats believe to be the essential nature of man as a free being. This, too, is part of the Christian understanding of history, for, as A. N. Whitehead has written, "the progress of humanity can be defined as the process of transforming society so as to make the original Christian ideals increasingly practicable for its individual members."¹ Freedom is one of these original ideals, not only political but spiritual freedom; yet without political freedom the evolution of a society of free spirits will be impossible. Neither Communism nor Fascism is interested in guaranteeing such freedom, for neither believes in it. History, both for the democrat and the Christian, is the process in which spiritual factors are increasingly expressed, and civilization, as Whitehead says, is concerned fundamentally with the growth of Beauty, Adventure, Truth, and Peace, about which none but a Christian-democratic philosophy of man and history is as a matter of principle concerned. For the Christian and the democrat alike it is in the emergence of values and the transmission of ideas which belong to culture that the interpretation of the historical process is to be found. That is, they both believe in the possibility of progress; in the ability of man to overcome the disruptive forces in civilization. Whereas Christianity denies that man can achieve perfection within time, and that human power is able unaided to bring about the ultimate degree of progress which will contribute to the establishment of an earthly society commensurable with the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in this world, democracy maintains that within time man can grow in his appreciation of freedom so that something approaching a reasonable political order will be realized. The only hope, on the political plane, for the establishment of such an order is through the triumph of a democratic way of life invigorated by a dynamic confidence in its own excellence. If it is to offer hope at this juncture to the peoples of Europe, it must first of all provide a permanent foundation for the reorganization of Europe. In order to do this democracy must, like Marxism and Germanism, have some vision of history not as happenings in individual states alone, but as a vast human movement, yet one which provides unity on a basis of reason and not of force.

In the meantime, however, as a necessary evil and not as an element of a permanent technique, force has to be employed to defeat the demonic forces which are engaged in the process of destroying the old, atomistic world in order to lay the foundations of a new order of society. In spite of liberal gestures, such as the admission of the right of nations to their own form of

¹ *Adventures of Ideas*, Cambridge, 1935, p. 18.

government, the democrat who knows what he is about is obliged to come to the conclusion that on the European continent there will not be room for two conceptions of government, the democratic and the totalitarian. One of these will have to go if civilization is to evolve towards political unification. The likelihood of friction and the improbability of adequate co-operation would be too great. On no other basis than a common political system can such unification be conceivable; if anything different is imagined, the lesson of the last twenty years has not been learned. Europe, of course, may become Sovietized. In that case freedom in the Western-liberal sense will disappear as it disappeared in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. But it is doubtful if continental nations will accept the Soviet system, unless it is the only alternative to European anarchy.

CHAPTER III

THE DEMONIC AS A FORCE IN HISTORY

I

THE problem of history is the problem of making sense of history, of interpreting it; whether the interpretation offered is correct or not depends upon its being in conformity with accepted facts and with a probable future, and also on how far it harmonises with the demands of reason and morality. As chronicle history often appears to be a "tale told by an idiot," as is the Thirty Years' War, or the annihilation of Christian culture in North Africa by the Moslems, the ravaging invasions of Tamelane and Genghis Khan, or the Nazi attempt to destroy European culture. Yet in spite of its apparent senselessness the philosophical historian believes that there is meaning in it, that it is moved by a momentum which directs it towards a predetermined end. The late Miguel de Unamuno wrote that "history is the thought of God in the world of men"¹ (*la historia es el pensamiento de Dios en la tierra de los hombres*); and while the Christian philosopher of history may wish this to be true, he discovers such a vast array of contradictions that he feels the demand of faith requires some qualification; and while the democrat believes in progress, he is compelled to witness great setbacks to his picture of civilization on the march and the gradual dissemination of his conception of rights and responsibilities. Both are compelled to be on their guard against any facile optimism. The prevailing ideas of the Victorians on the subject of progress are not, to our way of thinking, very satisfactory. Ruskin's dictum that "the real history of mankind is that of the slow progress of resolved deed following laboriously just thought" has some truth in it, but one cannot wholeheartedly endorse it any more than one can Matthew Arnold's saying that "the world is, by the very law of its creation, in eternal progress." To this pleasant thought that things are bound to get better and better Frederick the Great had rather a brusque rejoinder. A school inspector once went to him

¹ *La Agonia del Cristianismo*, p. 122.

arguing that the old severe system of education should be changed, since intelligent people were bound to recognize that the inborn inclination of man was towards good rather than evil. "You don't know this accursed race as I do," Frederick replied. "It is more probable that man sprang from evil spirits than from a being whose nature is good." While bearing in mind Frederick's cynicism, we do well to remember that there is demonic element in life which leads, as Berdyaev has noticed, to the passing of humanism into anti-humanism.

The idea of progress, of things getting better and better, would lead ultimately to some form of Utopianism, but the arrival of this condition of society is being continually delayed by the great devastating setbacks which reveal the enormity and extent of evil and the power of demonic forces which is so conspicuous a feature of the contemporary world-scene. One cannot imagine history being "moved" without these violent convulsions, but the democrat has a feeling that with the extension of reason over an increasing number of the aspects of the lives of nations, such convulsions should get less and less; instead, they are increasing in violence. Demonic outbursts would seem to be the most significant factors in the present stage of world-history. They call, therefore, for some attention if we are to have some understanding of the forces which are involved in the "making" of history and civilization.

2

Goethe, in his *Conversations with Eckermann*, expressed several times his opinions about the demonic (*das Dämonische*). "The demonic is that which cannot be analysed by understanding and intelligence. It is not found in me, but I am subjected to it." (2.3.1831.) Napoleon is a supreme example of the demonic, and Goethe agrees with Eckermann that the demonic is found particularly in certain events, in nature, and in some creatures. Frederick the Great and Byron belonged to this demonic type (18.3.1831). The demonic is the irrational, something to be experienced rather than defined.

Paul Tillich, formerly a distinguished professor in Germany, in a work entitled *The Demonic: a Contribution to the Understanding of History* holds that the demonic is "the abysmal in things," the "irruption of the abysmal," achieving its fullest expression in personality, taking the form, at the present time, of æstheticism, capitalism, and nationalism. It is through the assertion of the divine that the domination of the demonic in human life is to be destroyed.¹

The demonic consists of

elemental creative powers which have living form, but which, when they achieve excess of power and interfere with the organic unity of form, become destructive principles.²

In primitive art there is not only a lack of form, there is also an anti-form, a denial of form (*Form-widrigkeit*), not only a less-than-the-positive, but an anti-positive, and this æsthetic demonism, Tillich maintains, has its corresponding forms in other aspects of life. Moloch, for example, is the

¹ *Das Dämonische: ein Beitrag zur Sinnbedeutung der Geschichte*, Tübingen. 1926.

² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

prototype of all political demonism, and the most significant instance of this political-religious demonism for our time is the symbol of Dostoevski's Grand Inquisitor, for here is found the holy become destructive.

The tension between the creation and the destruction of form, which is the essence of demonism, does not include the "Satanic," which is the purely negative; for

the Satanic is the principle of negation, destruction, that which is inimical to reason, considered in isolation and objectified.¹

The demonic has in it this two-fold dialectic aspect of creativeness and destructiveness: hence the great powers of the present time—nationalism, capitalism, communism, revolution, etc.—are not Satanic, however destructive or nihilistic they may appear. For

where the destructive element is lacking one may speak of naked power, genius, and creative force, but not of demonism. And conversely, where destructiveness is seen without creative form it is fitting to speak of error, dissolution, decay, etc., but not of the demonic. . . . The depth of the demonic is measured according to its dialectic aspect.²

The demonic, then, is "a form-destroying irruption from the creative depths in things."³

It has its expression in spiritual activity, in demonic personalities, and for this reason the primary object of demonic activity is personality itself, which is disintegrated and divided. The result of this is "possessedness", but this again is not a purely negative state of being. Even though "possession (or possessedness) is the attack upon unity and freedom, upon the very centre of personality," it has in it more than anti-personal activity. Even in the Gospels the maniac, while a split personality, was able to recognize Christ as the Christ.

The demonic expresses itself in the attack on personality, on the synthetic unity of spirit, as a totally-encroaching power which is not of the order of nature but spiritual. The spiritual locus from which it comes is the unconscious.

¹ Ibid., p. 8.

² Ibid., p. 9. An admirable example of the Satanic character is Mephisto in Goethe's *Faust*. Whereas Faust combines the characteristics of creativeness and destructiveness, Mephisto is purely negative. He says of himself: *Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint*, and justifies himself as follows:

Und das mit Recht; denn alles, was entsteht,
Ist wert, dass es zugrunde geht . . .
So ist denn alles, war ihr Sünde,
Zerstörung, kurz das Böse nennt,
Mein eigentliches Element.

(*Faust*, Pt. I, ll. 1338-45.)

"I am the spirit who denies . . .
and that with justice, for everything that exists
has value only in so far as it perishes. . . .
So, therefore, all that you call sin,
destruction, in short, Evil,
is my own element."

³ Ibid., p. 12. "Dämonie ist gestaltwidriges Hervorbrechen des schöpferischen Grundes in den Dingen."

Examples of it are the Nietzschean "will-to-power" and the erotic impulse, "the two polarized and yet intimately connected powers of the Unconscious." Further, social demonism is not to be sought in chaos, "but in the highest and symbolically most significant expression of the spirit of the time." The issue here is not so much the dissociation of the personal as "the destruction of the personal by the all-embracing social unity."

If we are prepared to accept Tillich's analysis of the demonic principle as a fact of psychology and history (and it is one which could be applied to the study of creative genius in its varied forms) certain things emerge which cannot be excluded from our observation of history and our endeavour to read some purpose into it. The forces at work in the realm of politics (if we regard war, as did Clausewitz, as the continuation of politics by other means) are demonic forces in the fullest sense of the term, especially at a time of revolution and upheaval. This is particularly true of the German revolution, for Hitler is the demonic personality *par excellence*, through whose agency old forms are destroyed and new ones brought into being; and as the symbol of the state acting upon the individual and society in a most disruptive form, yet creating at the same time the conditions in which new forms may emerge, he has become the embodiment of naked power and in order to achieve his ends has appealed to the emotional depths of personality. The only political "form" which is totally destructive is sheer nihilism or anarchism, and neither of these has had much success. National Socialism was not technically anarchistic, though it aimed at the destruction of political, social, and religious values created by Western Europe. The National Socialist state, however, was the most potent disintegrating force known to the contemporary world, for its method was first to disintegrate its future victim and then strike down when all resistance has gone.

Independently of Tillich, Dr. Karl Mannheim has described the strategy of Hitler in terms which are almost identical with what Tillich has written about the disintegrative aspect of the demonic. For Hitler's method has been to isolate the individual from the traditional group of which he was a member so as to be able to remove from him all resistance to the forces liberated by revolution.¹ He did this by breaking down the traditional groups of society for the purpose of rebuilding the national (that is German) group on the basis of a new pattern. What Hitler did was to release the demonic forces which are always latent in the state because its very nature is such that it is liable at any moment to be used to tyrannize over the individual.

Treitschke was right when he said that the state is power. This is not equivalent to stigmatizing the state as essentially evil, or as a necessary evil, for power is simply the stuff, the language, of politics. To think of a state without power is as unreasonable as to imagine a society as existing without any principle of cohesion, which would be anarchism. Power is a function of politics, and the state must have power; it must have the right to compel.

Without this demonic, violent power of compulsion, says Emil Brunner, we cannot imagine how any unity of a people could have come into existence, and without the power of compulsion the state cannot fulfil its divinely appointed course in and for society.

¹ *A Diagnosis of our Time*, p. 95. (Kegan Paul, 1943.)

This is true enough; and it is also true, as Brunner proceeds to point out, that the state is an

almost perfect instrument for that egoism which is opposed to God. The superior material power of the state leads to a tyrannical misuse of power and to a violent exploitation of the weak. . . . No sphere on earth provides a better playground for the Satanic element than the power of the state. . . . We cannot say that only in the state men express their most savage lust for power, but in the state their will to power receives a wholly different, even a pseudo-religious character. It is therefore no accident that in the New Testament the state is described quite often under the figure of the Dragon (Satan), as by a title ordained of God.¹

The demonic, then, is an irrational force which irrupts into history and determines the course, from time to time, of historical movements, and the men who initiate such movements are its media. The great forces of the contemporary world are demonic forces: communism, nationalism, fascism, destructive violence, and their exponents are spiritual personalities in whom the demonic becomes articulate: Lenin destroying in order to build; Hitler destroying, or attempting to destroy, cultures and civilizations ("die Revolution des Nihilismus," in Rauschnig's phrase), and the capitalist as the agent and director of economic forces which subjugate and deface the human image in order to provide material goods and profits. Their demonic nature can be pictorially visualized: Lenin addressing vast crowds of unleashed revolutionaries in time of crisis and collapse, with violence and terrorism and great fear in the background; the triumph of National Socialism against the lurid background of the Reichstag fire; the dwarfed human figures working in the glow of a vast forge or dehumanized into shapeless brute force during the industrial revolution in the Black country; Napoleon as portrayed in Hardy's *Dynasts* destroying governments and setting up others against another background of cosmic conflict. Somehow an interpretation of history has to find room for this demonic element which is undetachable from the history of nations; there is an indissoluble connection between the demonic and the historical, suggesting that history is a dialectic process, an interaction of polarized forces and ideas. Such an analysis brings sharply to the fore the question as to whether history can be regarded as the working out of a moral purpose. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesian church, seemed to be psychically aware of the existence of demonic forces, and missionaries in India have testified that certain habits and cults almost make one believe in the actual objective existence of evil, so to speak "in the air."

Theologically the demonic character of great historical movements might suggest the problem of cosmic dualism, which is not to be identified with original sin, but with the possibility of the existence of evil as an objective force together with that of goodness. History, rather than abstract speculation, would be the foundation of Manichæism; for, if it be held possible that at some period the human spirit can be conceived of as being sensitive to supramundane influences, a religion is not nonsensical which attempts to provide in its world-view a place for "powers," "the rulers of the darkness of this world," and "spiritual wickedness in high places." Saint Paul would clearly regard the taking unto one of the whole armour of God as a stand against the demonic powers of the world. And however such powers may

¹ *The Divine Imperative* (Lutterworth Press, 1937), pp. 445, 447.

be allegorized, symbolized, mythologized, or rationalized, the power of the demonic, of the "abysmal," of the black, yawning destructive void, is a real experience and not a fantastic dream. There is something more than the "numinous"¹ experienced in the contemplation of the release of the demonic into the historical through the medium of the demonic figures of history: there is a quality present which can only be described as disruptive, disintegrative; but it is not found alone: otherwise it would be *purely* destructive. It is not so much a case of "Evil be thou my good" as "There is some soul of goodness in things evil." Both Iago and Mephistopheles belong to myth rather than to history; but both Shakespeare and Goethe, and one might include Saint Paul, Dostoevski,² Thomas Hardy and Jakob Wassermann, were acutely aware of the power of the demonic as partly expressed in events and personalities which are corrosive and disruptive.

At the present moment in history this upsurge of the demonic, which interrupts and violently distorts the historical movement, might lead one to conclude that history is meaningless, that there is no assurance that it will continue uninterruptedly, or that it can be regarded as a rational process related to a good end. Civilization appears to be at the mercy of the irrational; it has to be defended not by reason but by force; not by the appeal to the intelligence, to morality, but by resort to methods which are implicitly condemned by the very word civilization. We are reminded of the perplexed agony of Dante as he contemplated the political anarchy of his contemporary Italy and wondering, at the same time, if there might be some purpose in it if only it could be discovered:

E se licito m'è, o sommo Giove
che fosti in terra per noi crocifisso?
son li giusti occhi tuoi rivolti altrove?
O è preparazion che nell' abisso
del tuo consiglia fai, per alcun bene
in tutto dall' accorger nostro scisso?

For me
If it be lawful, O Almighty power!
Who was on earth for our sakes crucified,
Are Thy just eyes turned elsewhere? or is this
A preparation, in the wondrous depth
Of Thy sage counsel made, for some good end,
Entirely from our reach of thought cut off? (Cary).

Purgatorio, Canto VI, II. 118-123.

¹ The word used by Otto in *The Idea of the Holy* to describe the experience of the darkly-impressive-awesome.

² Several of Dostoevski's characters belong to this class: Raskolnikov, Dmitri and Ivan Karamazov, and in particular Shigalov and Verhovensky in *The Possessed*. One of Wassermann's main themes is the impact of disruptive personalities on other characters: of Luise Dercum the actress on the barrister Laudin in *Wedlock*; of Ulrike on the Mylius family in *Ulrike Woytich*; of Philippine on the musician Nothafft; of Waremmé on Etzel Andergast, Etzel on the doctor Kerkhoven, and Ganna on the novelist Alexander Herzog in the trilogy *The Maurizius Case*, *Etzel Andergast*, and *Joseph Kerkhoven's Third Existence*. The theme occurs, too, in *Christian Wahnschaffe* (*The World's Illusion*), and is embodied in the nihilistic, completely non-moral characters Amadeus Voss and Niels Engelschall. It is explicable in terms of Wassermann's own personal experience, which he describes in his autobiography, *My Path as German and Jew*.

Or we can recall Dürer's famous etching *Ritter, Tod und Teufel* as a permanent record of how one of Europe's greatest creative spirits saw the situation in the light of his own moral experience. It is not enough for the knight to be armed with virtue: he must have the armour as well, for the shadowy undergrowth is alive with half-hidden dangers and is suggestive of even greater ones which are unseen. Well-meaning idealism alone cannot defeat the Beast from the Abyss, and it is folly to imagine, as some good people do, that it can; for in modern world-struggles it is not merely that the irrational-demonic in man has to be fought, but that it is using as its instruments the fruits of human reason and the product of man's enlightenment. Such is the modern paradox.

Yet we must not allow ourselves to be so baffled and overcome by this gigantic picture of the Beast, of the demonic organized to destroy, that the world-scene and all that happens on it appear senseless to us. The only reason, ultimately, for wanting to live is our belief in a rational universe, in spite of its apparent irrationality. There is such a thing as what Cervantes called the Reason of Unreason (*la razón de la unrazón*); in other words, beneath the violence and the unparalleled savagery of the twentieth-century conflict there is something which requires the light of reason to investigate it. For, like other great challenges to history, it is a challenge to our "feeling" for civilization. The challenge of Islam to Christian Spain and France from the eighth century, at the time of the Crusades, and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, resulted in temporary consolidations of Western Christendom, though the effects of this stimulus were short-lived. The challenge of 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, was met by the diffusion of the values which have been organic to the growth of civilized life in the West: the knowledge and culture of the Greeks. The Japanese threat to China, which is part of the recent world-struggle, has resulted in the consolidation of Chinese life and a deeper appreciation and purification of her national culture. It is the *Yin* which has converted the more static Chinese life into *Yang*: the same can be said of the effect of the titanic challenge to our western inheritance: it has compelled us to re-examine it and to appreciate it. Rauschnig is of the opinion that Nazism has a function in liquidating an old order, in forcing us to question the foundations of our Western tradition; and if it is understood in this way, it ceases to be meaningless. Now one of the characteristic things about evil is its insidiousness. It insinuates itself into the good, or at least into the not-wholly-evil, poisons and corrupts it, makes men call evil good and good evil. Rauschnig relates how he observed the gradual transformation of acquaintances and friends who were honest, decent men, into creatures who became shifty, cunning, easily corruptible, and even cruel. They became, literally, "possessed." And in this, Nazism as a manifestation of evil is most truly demonic; it is a form of demoniac possession, an ancient and widespread phenomenon.¹ Its existence in the diabolized systems of to-day shows that belief in it is not merely

¹ See Oesterreich, *Possession, Demoniac and Other* (Kegan Paul). One of the characteristics of "possession" is the imparting of the personality of the "demon" to the possessed. The resultant schizophrenic condition is similar to the spiritual state of Germany during the Nazi period. By no means the least sinister feature of Nazism was the communication, mentioned above by Rauschnig, of the evil in a demonic personality to those previously uncorrupted.

superstition, but a fact of experience. I have met examples of this kind of possession, *Besessenheit*, in converted Nazis, which is more than fanaticism. It is as though what in the New Testament is described as a "devil" or evil spirit has entered into the souls of people, as the "soul" of the criminal Dr. Mabuse entered into the director of the asylum in Fritz Lang's horrific and disturbing film *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, taking complete possession of the man and compelling him to carry out his devilish and complicated plans. Evil can no longer be considered to be a mere negation of good: it has a positive, one might almost say, tangible, violence, an objective existence of its own; though to say this opens up a profound metaphysical problem which is outside the scope of the present discussion. In its insistence and insidiousness it is a challenge of the first importance, not to our sense of order alone, but to our feeling for the historical, our sense of history, and of what constitutes the essence of civilization.

The organization of evil, of the demonic, is not only a challenge to man's deep-seated need to develop civilized values, such as law, order, good faith; it throws into relief the problems inherent in that which it opposes and sets out to destroy: democracy, which is the political equivalent of the moral value freedom. Democracy, in the liberal-western sense, presupposes not "possession" but the operation of reason; not the swarming of the termite-man, but the co-operation of reasonable beings who are free to co-operate, and whose conduct is not determined by the purely biological end of survival by following a kind of preordained pattern, but of a selection of termini of human behaviour which can be reached through the exercise of volition. It is true that the mass can constitute itself into an ochlocratic state, that it, or those who act on its behalf, can seize the instruments of production and the mechanism of the state and dictate to the minority or even liquidate it. The *demos* can become an *ochlos*, the people can be transformed into an organized mob; but this condition is not democracy. Mob-rule is not moral: democratic rule is. For in becoming a mob the "people" is liable to become "possessed," as revolutionary mobs, for example, always are. Mob-rule is not capable of producing civilized forms of life; democracy, if it is true to its own nature, cannot easily avoid doing so. The mob, the termite-demos, is usually the agent of demonic irrationality; a democracy the expression of free association. To-day the most conspicuous historical factor is the struggle between the mob-form of life led by an oligarchy and the democratic type: between demoniac possession and men who wish to be allowed to live in their right mind. When the demon is bound and chained there will emerge the perplexing problem of exorcism. That will be the concern of the forces which are implicit in the word "civilization."

For the historic mission of democracy is to overcome and finally defeat the demonic element in politics. The stage in historical movement which we have now reached would appear to be the last in which this demonic element can have any part to play, for the possibilities of the old order are exhausted. The demonic must, however, be overcome, in-order that the old order, which is based on power-politics, may not be able to continue; for power-politics, like the demonic-irrational which is involved in it, will have to give way before the rule of reason if a civilized order of life is ever to be established.

Its establishment will be the only guarantee of the realization of freedom, which Hegel considered to be the purpose of world history, though democracy would doubtless understand by the word "freedom" something different from Hegel's conception of it.

The historical mission of the West, which was once synonymous with the mission of Christendom, is to provide such freedom as will enable man to live in the awareness that he is a member not of a nation with a parochial outlook but of a multinational community which shall have achieved unity and of which the basis will be a true harmony of interests, a common faith, and, as far as possible, a common political outlook. That is the only kind of society which in this modern age, because of the incalculable expansion of technical control as one of the instruments of realizing the essential unity of civilization, can be the expression of reason applied to political organization.

But here we must not be carried away by any uncritical optimism. Every new achievement of human progress carries with it a demonic potency on a new level. There is no assurance that, from the purely human standpoint, however a political system may be brought under the control of reason, it will not become the expression of demonic power. Democracy alone cannot overcome the demonic in man and history, for, as Tillich has suggested, its seat is spiritual, in personality. From the standpoint of the Christian interpretation of history it is through the recovery by democracy of its spiritual foundations in a new Puritanism that the demonic will be overcome. To imagine that the political alone will succeed in overcoming it is to commit the error of attributing autonomy to the realm of politics, that is to the realm in which the irruption of demonic forces is most conspicuous.

Historical decisions depend not only on circumstances but on the character of the men who create the circumstances and take the responsibility, and character is not a political product. It belongs to the deeper realm of the spirit, of morality, ultimately on the religious factor. Hence it is insufficient to expect the political to be the cure for a political disease; the causes go far deeper than the political surface; so must the cure. Political demonism is the object of moral judgment and brings the whole sphere of politics within the scope of theological examination. As the main expression of it is the sinful exaltation of self and state, the quest for power for personal and national reasons, its defeat is a question of crucial importance to the Christian philosopher.

CHAPTER IV

THE ETHICAL SCENE

I

CIVILIZATION at the present time is largely the result of forces liberated by the Renaissance. The detaching of various aspects of man's personal and social and economic life from belief in a supernatural world has led (as Berdyaev has rightly contended) to the atomization and anarchization of modern life,

to eudæmonism in ethics, to the independence of science of ethical considerations (though without such independence science could not have been liberated), the autonomy of art, and to the increasing dependence of philosophy on the sciences; the result being that there is no longer any organic or unitary conception of life. Its multifarious activities are not held together and made to cohere or given a wider unity by reference to something beyond themselves, and consequently culture appears to be in a state of disintegration; for it is dynamized by no great creative power. It may be to the credit of such movements as National Socialism that, in spite of their demonic and barbarous character, they have attempted to recover this lost sense of organic unity, the binding concept being, of course, not God or Christendom, but the *Volks-gemeinschaft* (folk-community). There is no such thing as science or art for its own sake: the idea of the autonomy of science belongs to a past, bourgeois phase of social life; everything, including the Church, must be subordinate to the interests of the *Volk*: only so can an integrated culture be recovered and liberated from the effect of the corrosive acids of internationalism and of democratized ideas of freedom. There is no "abstract" idea of justice: it is simply the instrument of the party for the purpose of serving the interests of the *Volk*. It is there for the protection of the *Volk*, not to guarantee the rights of the individual as an autonomous personality or to safeguard his liberty, for there is no such liberty apart from the collective liberty of the *Volk*. The eminent German Jurist, Dr. Carl Schmitt,¹ has explained that the National Socialist polity is an integrated polity, in which no distinction is drawn between the state, the party, and the people. Such a view revolutionizes, or bolshevizes, Western ideas of law and ethics, but it does, or would if carried out, recreate an organic culture which would seem to have vanished during the "modern" period which Berdyaev considers to have come to an end.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to consider the nature of ethical conceptions held at any particular time if we are to understand the nature or the latent possibilities of historical forces which are in movement at that time and likely to condition the future, for the course of history will be very different if purely humanist or secular rather than Christian ethics are allowed to dominate: ethics which have no transcendental sanction but which are the reflection of passing moods and social conditions. The responsibility rests with each generation to decide which ethical system shall dominate its own life; it is in the power of man to "make" his own history, and decisions once made cannot easily be reversed. There is some truth in the Marxist belief that morality is the product of the social and economic conditions of the time; but it is very small. It is much more accurate to say that social and economic and political conditions, in other words, the historical situations, are the result of prevalent ethical notions.² A glance at the world of our time shows what is the result of applying to collective life and the relations between states ethical ideas which have no relation to what the Christian

¹ *Staat, Bewegung, Volk* (Hanseatischer Verlag, Hamburg, 1934).

² Cf. Aldous Huxley: "It is in the light of our beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality that we formulate our conceptions of right and wrong; and it is in the light of our conceptions of right and wrong that we frame our conduct, and not only in relations of private life, but also in the sphere of politics and economics." (*Ends and Means*, Chatto and Windus, p. 10.)

believes to be the nature of reality. It is an age of moral relativism, and one source of morality, whether the individual or the state, is as good as any other. We can go further, and say that there is a definite irrevocability about the conditions of affairs resulting from a drastic devaluation or revaluation of ethical values which is inseparable from the pattern of history. We cannot expect nations in which there has been a total upheaval to return to their pre-revolutionary condition, assuming even that such a return were desirable; colossal moral revolutions are bound to leave an indelible impression on the minds and faces of nations, defeated though the revolutionaries may be in wars against other states which fear or disapprove of their revolutionary achievements. The significance of the German revolution as the most profoundly demonic and dynamic force in modern times lies precisely in the evidence it shows of what can be done by the large-scale application of fundamental changes in ethical conceptions.

2

Now whether we turn to the newest revolutionary country, or to the oldest and most conservative democracy, we find that the ethical scene is, in fundamentals, the same: it is heavily shadowed by the repudiation, conscious or unconscious, of a supernatural, that is, religious, basis for ethics; that is, ethical standards which have their immediate origin in the Christian view of the world, and which for good or ill have been derived from or associated with it are, as *Christian* standards, given scant attention; or are, if observed, absorbed in part into a wider ethical outlook which is purely humanist. This has profound significance for the present historical situation. There are, of course, men in every generation who, like Nietzsche, want to transform our notions of values, or who, like the poet John Davidson, want to abolish them, though such desires do not become bound up with the texture of historical development until they are embodied in demonic-dynamic figures like Lenin and Hitler.

Yet this shedding of earlier conceptions of life and morality continues, transforming the mental and spiritual habits of the nation. In both literature and ethics old forms of expression have been or are in process of being discarded. The writings of James Joyce, and of D. H. Lawrence, plunging into the primeval and elemental depths of blood and flame and flesh and darkness ("belly-worship," as someone has described it), are symptoms of a change of moral outlook no less than the attacks of Bertrand Russell on the one hand, and Alfred Rosenberg and Ernst Jünger on the other, on traditional Christianity. Joyce's notions about English style, the conceptual character of contemporary music, the abstraction of surrealist painting are as symptomatic of a general mood as are current notions about morality. They indicate that there is no longer any objective criterion to which art or conduct can be referred, just as the totalitarian states acknowledge no objective or generally accepted standards of truth or honour in diplomacy. Not only has the old certainty gone, but a nihilistic attitude has taken its place. Pure sensationalism and solipsism (though these may be regarded chiefly as a phase of the nineteenth-twenties) seem to be typical of the outlook of our cleverer and better known

exponents of the mood of the post-war generation of intellectuals. There are some, such as Mr. J. C. Powys,¹ who invite us to become thorough-going individualists, seeking satisfaction in the fleeting sensation of the moment. On the other hand we find a less egocentric repudiation of Christian morality in the preaching of world-transformation by means of the collective control of life, either by the state, as exemplified in the cononomic and cultural planning according to the Soviet system, or by the technologists, which Mr. H. G. Wells has been advocating for a generation. There are others, as for example Mr. Aldous Huxley, who give us a picture of certain types of modern society which are pitiful because of their utter purposelessness and absence of all moral anchorage.² One might mention, too, Mr. Wells' significant book *The World of William Clissold* as a similar expression of revolt against a morality which is being abandoned. Clissold has his own standards of conduct, and deplores their absence in modern youth; but his own morality in sexual relationships is what is usually called "liberated," his world-view consisting of the advocacy of the ability not of morality or religion but of scientific organization to control life and to offer a sound basis for human progress. What counts ultimately is the human reason, which may be guided by considerations of expediency, but not of theistic morality resting on a basis of the universal spiritual needs of human nature.

This modern faith of the scientific humanist in man's self-sufficiency, in the ultimacy of reason, in the future redemptive mission of science, illustrates further the conclusion that men have broken away from religious authoritarianism in the realm of morals, and have substituted for religious authority either a complete agnosticism or other forms of secular authority: that of the state or of a particular class, both of which are in any case incompatible with the Christian view of life. Neither the authority of the Church nor of the general Christian tradition is considered to be fitted for modern needs: the stumbling-block is either belief in God or the difficulty, or impossibility, of believing in a God who is consistent with the scientific interpretation of the universe. One form of authority is abandoned, and another substituted for it. It may be the behaviourist psychology of Watson, or it may be the psychoanalytical psychology of Freud, each of them leading to an ultimate pessimism because of their implicit denial of free will. Freud's thesis that our ideas of God are the projection of the idea of fatherhood is familiar enough; but Freud has no right to say that psychoanalysis "concludes" that the idea of God is illusion, and that the religious man's picture of the creation of the universe is the same as his picture of his own creation.³ He tells us all the old, discreditable things about religion, that the "biographies of almost all

¹ John Cowper Powys, *The Meaning of Culture, In Defence of Sensuality, A Philosophy of Solitude* (Jonathan Cape).

² Cf. Mr. Cardan in *Those Barren Leaves* (Chatto and Windus):

"As long as you don't talk about moral laws and all that sort of thing there's no absurdity. For it's obvious that there are no moral laws. There are social customs on the one hand and there are individuals with their individual feelings and moral reaction on the other. Almost nothing, for example, is immoral for me. Positively, you know, I can do anything and remain respectable in my own eyes, and in the eyes of others not merely decent, but even noble."

³ *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Hogarth Press, p. 208.

the eminent people of the past show the disastrous results of the inhibition of thought"¹ resulting from religion, which, with due respect to Freud, is nonsense. Some, again, find in Pavlov's researches into the causes of salivation in dogs some consoling evidence for the supposition that Christian morality is doomed because all reactions are conditioned or unconditioned reflexes and therefore mechanical. That is one line of attack, one method of "debunking" Christian morality.

Another is exemplified in the denunciation of all morality but class-morality by Marxist Socialism² and by National Socialism of all which does not serve the interests of the nation. The Nazi radicals had no hesitation in using the lie as an instrument of propaganda. Hitler's justification of this technique is well known. Fundamentally Russian Communism and National Socialism are both manifestations of "Bolshevism," and nothing can be a more drastic denial of everything for which Christian civilization has stood.

We can say, therefore, that whatever the causes and however numerous they may be, there are many factors to-day which suggest that Christian morality and the Christian theism in which it is founded, and all they have stood for, are in danger of collapse. Authority in the religious sphere has gone; everyone, at any rate in Protestant countries, is aware that there is now no unquestioned standard of reference to which one can be directed. Gogarten³ mentions as two elements in the organization of the state on the one hand custom and convention and on the other the acceptance of categorical demand involved in the acknowledgment of obligation. It is, he says, a question of vital importance which of these two shall have priority. The former: the proposition, "One does this or that"—does not belong to the fundamentally ethical conception of society. The latter "You must do this or that"—does involve an ethical conception of its nature and scope. To-day we appear to be afflicted with the substitution of customary behaviour for deeper and more thoroughgoing imperative demand of conscience, either individual or collective, at any rate in the so-called liberal countries; and what is true in regard to society is equally true in regard to religion and ethics. It is not the recognition of the "You-ought" which governs conduct so much as the "One does this or that." In other words, from the standpoint of the Christian moralist complete subjectivism or relativism has taken the place of the acknowledgment of religious claims which he considers binding on all men. Authority in the realm of morals has ceased to exist. Yet no new certainty has taken the place of the old standards. Modern man is rootless,

¹ Ibid., p. 219.

² "We repudiate all morality which proceeds from supernatural ideas or ideas which are outside class conceptions. In our opinion morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of the class war; everything is moral which is necessary for the annihilation of the old exploiting social order and for the uniting of the proletariat. Our morality thus consists solely in close discipline and in conscious war against the exploiters. We do not believe in external principles of morality, and we will expose this deception." "Whereas in a society in which there are not classes lying is a disadvantage in itself, because it compels members of the society to use their energy in discovering the truth, the case is quite different in a society based on class. In the struggle of an exploited class against their enemies, lying and deceit are very important weapons." (a) Lenin and (b) Preobazhensky, quoted in R. Fülöp-Müller, *Lenin and Gandhi*, Putnam, p. 41-42.

³ Friedrich Gogarten, *Politische Ethik*, p. 136, Jena, 1932.

and he is not always unaware of it. He feels that what he has hitherto believed is no longer worth his loyalty. The old doctrines have no longer any persuasive power, and Christianity makes neither emotional nor intellectual appeal. The old forms he has abandoned; no new certainty lies before him. He has no fixed standards; so he obeys those which he sets himself. Acute observers, such as Dr. C. G. Jung, have noticed this,¹ and have recorded their observations with a definiteness which suggests some half-conscious longing and perplexity in those who have lost the old certainty without discovering a new one.

Even if one welcomes the anti-humanist criticisms of Mr. Leonard Hyde in his *Prospects of Humanism* or that delightful essay in autobiography by Mr. Hugh I'Anson Fausset entitled *A Modern Prelude*, one cannot help turning away disappointed, for the one defends the theism of the Christian sort while disliking Christianity in all its known forms, and the other, after passing successfully through a variety of stages, seeks spiritual satisfaction in a kind of Oriental mysticism. Neither of these believers in theism and in what are more or less Christian standards of morality is prepared to find in the one the ground and fulfilment of the other. Further, we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that vast masses to-day have revolted against or quietly abandoned the religious view of life and that this abandonment is shared, unhappily, by the intelligent sections of the population. In 1926 the *Nation* published a questionnaire on religious belief. The number of those who responded was fairly small, but of those who did so only twenty-five per cent believed in organized religion, and about thirty per cent in Christianity in one form or another. The same questionnaire was issued to the *Daily News*' readers, and of the small number of replies sixty-three per cent. were in the affirmative. It is interesting to note that the affirmations were in inverse proportion to the intellectual level of the periodicals concerned.² Further: it is not those who have an avowedly spiritual message who are listened to by the so-called progressive sections of the community, but those whose beliefs are completely secular, and who have views about the world quite different from those which are held by Christians. Mr. A. L. Rowse, for example, sees no future for the Christian Church as a religious organization, though in the future the church buildings may be used as convenient resting-places for people who seek quietness during a busy day of noisy and strenuous work.³ The appeal of a thoroughly secularist ethic, based on a political rather than a religious outlook, is the predominating factor in the present ethical scene, and is a convincing symptom of a general rejection of a faith based in the supernatural. Dr. Joad a few years ago asked a group of twenty students how many of them were in any

¹ "Every one of them (modern men) has the feeling that our religious truths have somehow or other grown empty. Either they cannot reconcile the scientific and religious outlooks, or Christian tenets have lost their authority and their psychological justification. People no longer feel themselves to be redeemed by the death of Christ; they cannot believe—they cannot compel themselves to believe, however happy they may deem the man who has a belief. Sin for them has become something quite relative; what is evil for one is good for the other." C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (Kegan Paul), p. 26.

² A series of articles published in the *Spectator* during the last three months of 1937 showed a pitiful lack of solid ethical and religious background or interest among those whose views they were designed to express, namely the "Under Thirties."

³ A. L. Rowse, *Politics and the Younger Generation*, p. 194 ff., though even Mr. Rowse feels some regret at any eventual disappearance of religion.

sense of the word Christian. Three said they were; seven had never given the matter any thought at all; while the other ten were "belligerently anti-Christian." Only two attended regularly any Christian service. Eleven had not been to church or chapel since they could remember. "Indeed," Dr. Joad continues, "it is no longer necessary for young people proposing to enter a church to leave their intelligences in the porch; nevertheless, the churches remain unentered. Of those who come to maturity to-day, the vast majority make no contact with organized religion; so far as they are concerned, it might never have existed."¹ Dr. Joad, however, would appear to deplore the general outlook in youth which is associated with this indifference. Our humane morality, which is supposed to be a typically English characteristic, may endure for a while; but with a background of moral *accidie* it is doubtful whether it will survive another generation. Christian morality, and the near-Christian morality which is still with us, are so inseparable from the Christian belief in God that an attempt to justify or maintain the one while throwing the other overboard cannot have lasting success. When, for example, Bertrand Russell expounds his familiar thesis that morality has nothing to do with religion, he seems to lose consciousness of the need to hold moral principles at all.

"All moral rules," he says, "must be tested by examining whether they tend to realize the ends we desire. . . . I say the ends we desire, not ends that we ought to desire. What we ought to desire is merely what someone else wishes us to desire. . . . Outside human desires there is no moral standard."²

This is very superficial thinking, which is rendered more confused when Russell goes on to say that to build up the good life we must build up intelligence, self-control and sympathy. But why? He has already dispensed with moral obligation by discrediting the notion of "I ought," and by advocating an eudemonistic philosophy.

Such is the logical result of modern anti-moralism. The old citadel has fallen, and nobody will build it up or co-operate with anyone who would try. Even those who cannot allow themselves to be persuaded to become Christian are able to perceive the tragedy of the situation. For example, Mr. Aldous Huxley writes:

"By discrediting the Bible and providing a more obviously useful substitute for the study of the dead languages, triumphant science has completed the work of spiritual disunion which was begun when it undermined belief in transcendental religion and so prepared the way for the positivistic superstitions of nationalism and dictator-worship. It remains to be seen whether it will discover a way to put this shattered Humpty Dumpty together again."³

The Christian asks: why this bankruptcy of modern thought in its thinking about ethics? It is negative and uncreative in its conclusions, sceptical and cynical in its methods. It is unable to offer a conception of human nature which does justice to the ascertained facts about the mental and spiritual life of man.

¹ Article "Leaderless Youth," in the *Spectator*, February 17, 1939.

² Bertrand Russell, *What I believe*, pp. 37, 40.

³ *The Spectator*, December, 4, 1936.

3

There is, however, an intermediate state between out-and-out secular morality and religious morality: namely, what Dr. L. A. Reid has called "sacred non-religious morality,"¹ a kind of refined humanism which owes more than it would admit to Christianity. Mr. Aldous Huxley's statement that "it is in the light of our beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality that we form our conceptions of right and wrong"² might be taken as an example of this sacred non-religious type. "Beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality" constitute, for most people, what is understood to be religion or metaphysics; and for a humanist to use such a phrase seems to be dangerously near to admitting the reasonableness of metaphysics. Yet although Mr. Huxley would not entertain a theistic belief about the ultimate nature of reality, he appears (now) to look for a basis for morality in something beyond habit and environment, for these surely do not belong to the "ultimate nature" of reality; nor does he adopt a utilitarian or hedonistic view of morals. Dr. Julian Huxley, again, describing religion as the sense of the sacred, and regarding life with a sacramental reverence, has moments in which he seems to be attributing to the universe certain ultimate values existing in their own right and making absolute demands upon the will. Man must bring all his powers to the task of relating his life to the rest of reality; but the resultant construction must be held together by love and reverence. Dr. Huxley regards this as a true religion, involving an affirmation of the ultimate value of truth, goodness and beauty, and where these are lacking there is inadequate reverence in man's approach to reality.³

It must be admitted, however, that such a sacred non-religious morality as Dr. Huxley's is rare in contemporary writing on ethics; inspired by Christian theism it would reach a high level of Christian humanism, but without it love and reverence and charity do not attain to the Christian virtue of *Agapé*, which alone enables these qualities to be related to ultimate reality if that phrase is to refer to something actual and not merely conceptual. One cannot practise reverence towards the non-personal, the theoretical, the abstract: yet Dr. Huxley's "reality" is in the last analysis non-personal because God is not, so to speak, its constituent or main content. We should be revering something which is not there.

More recent publications by Dr. Joad,⁴ too, betray a sense of the sacredness of certain things, which is a constituent of religious morality, but he, too, rejects Christian theism, though here again one likes to see the influence (even if vigorously denied!) of what is, in its essentials, a Christian way of looking at the world. Dr. Joad appears from time to time to express a certain wistful regret at not being able to accept the religious (i.e. theistic) attitude towards life, a longing, satisfied sometimes when he visits old country churches,

¹ L. A. Reid, *Creative Morality*, pp. 185-203.

² A. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 10.

³ *Religion Without Revelation*, pp. 359, 373-4.

⁴ E.g., *Philosophy for our Times*, (1940). *God and Evil*, (1943).

for moments of adoration; but his convinced rationalism prevents him from really letting himself go. He rejects the Christian belief in the supernatural, and with it much of orthodox Christian morality; but Schweitzer's standard of the "ethic of reverence for life," justly applicable to Joad's outlook, might override some of the unpleasant elements in traditional Christian ethics (to which the rationalists are continually referring, though few, if any, enlightened modern Christians would associate themselves with the views they are so often engaged in denouncing). I am not suggesting that Dr. Joad is in any sense a "Christian" as that word is usually understood; in fact he would make a most downright denial of being any such thing;¹ yet in spite of such men as Joad and Huxley having no place in their scheme for organized Christianity or a traditional belief in God, one has a feeling that these devotees of love, reverence, beauty and truth as constituents of "reality" are "not far from the Kingdom of God." But their morality, though it is not for that reason any less admirable, is not Christian morality: nominally it is a rejection of it.

Secular humanist ethics represent a rejection of the Hebraic-Christian tradition, according to which morality is inseparably bound up with theism. The Hebrew *Torah* (The Law) is the most obvious example of this. The Law was given to Moses by divine revelation; the most minute injunctions regulating personal, social, and national life were of divine origin, and their infraction was not only an offence against society but a sin against God. Such was the formal conception of Hebrew ethics. Perhaps the Decalogue was never taken very seriously; its influence on Jewish life was far less than that of the Deuteronomic law; but it does represent, on a fairly primitive (yet surprisingly universal) level the coincidence of ethics and religion, or, rather, the ascription of divine sanctions to an ethical code.

In the great Hebrew prophets, whose importance both for a conception of ethics and the philosophy of history is very great, the connection between morality and religion is even closer. They show no knowledge of the Deuteronomic and Levitical law—for the reason that it was not Mosaic at all, but several centuries later and ascribed to Moses to give it proper authority—but, in contrast to legalistic notions of morality, proclaim the imperative character of the observance of an inner moral law and the practice of social and personal righteousness and the revealed will of God for man in his human relationships. They proclaimed on a lofty level that the will of God was binding upon men, and that God demanded that certain things should be done. Their ethical monotheism was one of the most significant contributions to the development both of religion and of ethics. The "Thus saith the Lord" of Amos was an expression in uncompromising form of the absolute demands of a supremely just God who was concerned both with history and with the individual life. The modern mood is a rejection of this conception of ethics, and of its New Testament continuation in which love (*agapé*) and the rest of the Christian virtues are regarded as deriving from the intervention of

¹ A few years ago Dr. Joad gave a vigorously negative answer to the question of the truth of Christianity. See his discussion with Arnold Lunn: *Is Christianity True?* His mood in his *Guide to Modern Wickedness*, however, is more sympathetic.

God through his self-revelation in Jesus. Christian, like Hebrew, ethics, are essentially theistic or religious ethics.

This close identification of religion and ethics, however, was not practised in a civilization, for example, which had in some respects attained a high level of culture and ethical solidarity and in which what is thought of as "civilization" reached a higher level than in Palestine. The ethical idealism of Confucius and Lao-Tze has no conspicuously theistic content, nor has the teaching of Buddha. The *Analects* of Confucius are as devoid of divine sanction as are the Eight Precepts of the Buddha. For these and other Eastern moralists ethical principles are good for their own sake because they promote and define human relationships. They do not require any sanction from anything "outside" human life; social relationships, personal needs, or the search for personal non-attachment provide sufficient justification for them. If they have any parallel in Hebrew literature it is with its Wisdom literature (*Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Sirach*), not with the prophetic writings, but without the former's theistic background, which is never very far away.

It was, however, precisely such a lack which was responsible for the limitations of Eastern ethical idealism. What the Eastern moralists taught was too much of a matter of personal taste and habit; and it is in the civilization in which they were practised that the social conscience has been so little in evidence, that history, until the impact upon it of more dynamic cultures, has been most static, and government so corrupt. It is not without significance that one of the most important of the steps taken by Chiang-Kai-Shek in his "purge" of Chinese life was the launching of the "New Life" movement, which had for its aim the redirection of the ethical principles of Chinese life, and that such a step came from a Christian. On the practical level non-theistic ethics have failed because of lack of driving force. The existence of ethical systems such as those of China and Israel, for example, separated by time and space and in no kind of contact with each other, testifies to the importance of considering the "law of nature" in passing any judgment on the relation of religion and ethics; but the "law of nature," despite its universality, does not carry with it any validation of the ethical systems or the moral idealism which derive from it. Grotius appealed to this principle of the "law of nature," regarding the rights and duties of man as resting upon universal human attributes; and the work of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 mark the beginning of the practical awareness of the need to base common agreements upon such universal rights and duties. But recent political systems have paid scant attention to these Conventions. The more radical "human" ethics have become the more "inhuman" have they also become. Berdyaev is right when he says that humanism rapidly passes into inhumanism or antihumanism.

The secularized humanist morality of to-day is little more than a somewhat æstheticized substitute for religion: it possesses no dynamic of its own; and where it is found it appears as a residue of the Christian tradition rather than as a germinating seed. Often it has its basis not in the "law of nature" but in personal preferences or social requirements, and it is to be feared that, without the dynamic of a belief in the supernatural, it will pass quietly from the scene. For it has little but protest to offer to the demonic forces in the

world, to what Reinhold Niebuhr has called "the dark and turgid impulses, embedded in the unconscious of the individual and defying and mocking his conscious control and his rational and moral pretensions"¹ and which are among the major causes of historical change. Humanist morality cannot deal with evil, sin, or a vitiated will; it can only observe these things or deny that they exist, and, as it were, pass by on the other side. It lacks the power to combat them. On the purely human level it may be "not far from the Kingdom of God," in so far as it embodies "righteousness, peace and joy" (omitting, of course, the Holy Ghost), but because it denies God it is fundamentally opposed to the Kingdom of God. It belongs to another and lower dimension.

Such, from the Christian standpoint, is the paradox of humanism. Its failure is to be found in its inadequacy. Its secular idealism, where it exists, is not harnessed to moral conflict, but to the task of introducing socialism, or some other movement of an intellectual character. Some of our humanists, it is true, realize its limitations. Thus Mr. Aldous Huxley, unwilling to commit himself to accepting any religion as such, admits that hitherto politics, education, economic planning, have not yet shown, and are not likely to show, any evidence that the goal desired by mankind can ever, by their application alone, be achieved.² On the other hand, he would deny that Christian ethics have been any more successful, and Christianity he dismissed contemptuously without giving it adequate consideration. Yet even though he cannot see any value in Christianity, it is comforting to know that he has realized the ineffectiveness of secular methods in helping man to reach what he believes to be the goal of human life.

4

In so far, then, as there is an attempt to introduce some moral approach to the experience of contemporary man, such an attempt is predominantly secular. Humanist ethics either repudiate Christian ethics because they are derived from theism, or endeavour to retain what is considered admirable in them while repudiating their supernatural foundation.

The result, for present-day civilization, is, from the Christian and humanist standpoints alike, disastrous. It would seem that Western civilization is bankrupt in those qualities which alone make for the reintegration of individual and collective life. Socialism and Fascism both have for their aims some form of integration, but are radically opposed to each other, and both are throughout secular. At present secularism cannot offer any clue as to what the destiny of the individual may be, for it has no sufficiently ultimate conception of such destiny to enable him to visualize it, though the advocates of both of these forms of state-integration agree that they have as their aim the setting

¹ R. Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, S.C.M. Press, 1936, p. 26.

² "If the ends we all desire are to be achieved, there must be more than a mere deflection of evil; there must be a suppression at the source, in the individual will. Hence it follows that large-scale economic and political planning is not enough." *Ends and Means*, p. 24, (Chatto and Windus).

free of man from plutocratic oppression, therefore giving him his freedom, within the collective, to "enjoy" values which have not hitherto been available to him, assuming that he desires them. Freedom, for the advocate of the corporative state, means freedom as guaranteed by the state, within a strong state, for weak states cannot guarantee freedom;¹ for the Socialist, it means the liberty which comes when the era of capitalist exploitation has been superseded by revolutionary or gradual change. But in neither case is freedom regarded as related to anything beyond the individual or the collective. It has no metaphysical implication.

The modern state has, generally speaking, become completely secularized. The abandonment of Christian, that is of supernaturally sanctioned, ethics, by individuals has led to a view of the state and of life as a whole which is devoid of what the Christian regards as moral content. Fascism, especially in its National Socialist form, attempted to restore the idea of morality as something deriving its sanction from the more-than-personal, that is from the super-ego the state. But this, the completely secular conception of morals, had in it the seeds of disintegration and dissolution, because it was based on what was fundamentally a form of moral relativism. The modern state, whether in its totalitarian form, or as the Third French Republic, is essentially secular, and because of this is more and more to be identified with the exercise of unrestricted power. As a state it is obliged to assume an attitude of either hostility or indifference towards religion and of indifference towards morality except in so far as its own safety or the interests of a particular group or, in the last resort, public decency, are concerned.²

The consequences of this indifference to divine sanctions for moral conduct are the source of great disturbance not only to Christians but others who are seriously concerned about the moral standards of the British people at the present time. It is often argued that the increase in the incidence of venereal disease, in expenditure on drink, in petty pilfering and in dishonesty generally, are due to war. This is only part of the truth, for the symptoms mentioned are those of a state of mind which has done no more than take advantage of the situation created by the war. War does not necessarily make people dishonest or immoral; but it does provide the opportunity for dishonest and immoral practices. The root of the trouble is not war but the abandonment of Christian morality by vast sections of the population. The following account of what goes on in a large factory employing about six thousand work-people describes only what has been revealed by investigation during the war period; but it is incredible that the state of soul of which the things described are the symptoms was not already undergoing disruption before the outbreak of war.

The employers provide many things for the use of the Plebs, but get little encouragement from them. Petty pilfering goes on every day, and the firm's property is continuously maltreated, in addition to which there is much waste. For instance, soap, hot water and clean towels are provided in the cloakrooms for the convenience and use of the Plebs, and yet many roller

¹ So Prof. Ernst Krieck, *Der Staat des Deutschen Menschen*, Ch. IV (Berlin, 1933).

² It should be added, however, that the framers of the American Constitution took no official cognizance of any religious bodies. Since the framing of that Constitution (Article VI) all churches have the same status before the law; none has any privilege. The causes and consequences of the separation of church and state in America are discussed in Willard L. Sperry's *Religion in America* (Oxford, 1945), pp. 44-70.

towels are stolen each week, hot-water taps are left running to waste, and when soap was rationed each fresh supply would disappear within five minutes of its being put on the hand-basins. Instructions were given for the issue of bar soap to be discontinued, and liquid soap containers were fitted. But the liquid soap disappeared too! . . . Ebony and chromium towel-rails and other such fittings were diligently unscrewed and taken away, to say nothing of the purloining of tools, overalls, raw material, and even cutting-diamonds.¹

This is not an isolated instance, for social workers and others who are in continual contact with the troops and with masses of people in war factories make similar observations.²

There is ample evidence to show that not only among intellectuals but in the masses there has been a great deterioration in moral standards. The gullibility of the masses and the ease with which Nazism reached and maintained its authority show how far the lack of any traditional moral valuations has been responsible for their lack of resistance to propaganda. The more closely we examine the general state of mind of the people as a whole the more clearly do we realize the truth of Ortega y Gasset's analysis of the mass-mind, and the more disturbing is the prospect for civilization in the future. It is increasingly obvious that where Biblical morality loses its hold on people there sets in a period of decay.

Analysis of the moral mood, then, during the first half of the twentieth century, especially between the two wars, is convincing in its testimony to the falling away from traditional moral standards and to the growth of a state of mind which is not the kind upon which civilization can build. Whether it is the prelude to a general decline in Western standards of life as a whole or not it is at present too early to say; but the prospect is by no means encouraging.

CHAPTER V

NEMESIS ON NEUTRALITY

I

STUDIED sectionally history appears to be little more than a series of events incapable of interpretation except in the light of the self-interest by which all nations are guided in matters of policy. How is it possible, for example, situated as we are in this present age, to see in the light of any rational, intelligible principle the erection of brutality into a principle of government, and of lawlessness into an agreed basis of "order"? Whether a contemporary despotism is long, such as that of Vicente Gomez of Venezuela, enduring for nearly twenty-five years, or short, like that of Hitler, whether an instrument of a family oligarchy, as in the first case, or of a great national party as in the

¹ *The Plebs in Conflict*: an article by Era Gray in *The Spectator*, June 2, 1944, on the state of mind in an engineering factory.

² Cf. *War Factory*, by Mass Observation, in which the editor, Mr. Tom Harrison, expresses his dismay at the prospects for democracy as implied by the listlessness shown by employees in another war factory. Other works by Mass Observation, e.g. *The Pub and the People*, describe a state of things which augurs ill for the democracy of the future unless there is a change in the moral temper of the people of Britain.

second, there appears to be little more in it than evidence of the truculence and cruelty of rulers and the weakness or gullibility of the ruled. History would seem to be little more than the consequence of human decisions and actions impinging upon the life of the age. In this sense the quest for "meaning" in history seems, at first sight, to have little purpose or success. For history seems to be no more than a series of events, of struggles for power, of conquests, treaties, capitulations, delicate manœuvrings, of the emergence of systems and classes which come and go without any assured permanence. It all looks very haphazard and arbitrary and senseless.

Yet one feels that history is, or should be, more than this; that the great movements and moments in human experience, such as those through which nations have been passing during the twentieth century, are not devoid of meaning if the right angle can be found from which they can be interpreted, or if a principle can be discovered in the light of which they are seen to be intelligible. The Hebrew prophets endeavoured to find in the most disastrous occurrences some expression of a moral order, regarding the conquerors who overran or threatened to overrun their country as instruments in the hands of God for the realization of his purposes in history. Usually they interpreted disaster as a judgment on political ineptitude or moral decadence.

It is along such lines that we have to search for meaning in the present historical crisis; and if we proceed along them we shall find that it can be understood as a form of nemesis: primarily a nemesis on an impossible neutrality; not on the part of small nations alone, but on neutrality as such, as a moral-political attitude.

2

Neutrality may be defined as a lack of concern, refusing to be involved in things, refusing to see that one cannot avoid being involved in them. During the years before the war America was neutral towards the League of Nations, and this attitude was fatal to its career, for it was clearly necessary that all great powers should support it if it was to become an efficient instrument. Britain and France, again, having been chiefly instrumental, through winning the First World War, in liberating the smaller powers, including the "Succession States," were at fault in not showing greater interest in their development. It is true that France was in political alliance with Poland and Czechoslovakia, yet on the whole her attitude towards them was not disinterested: they were elements in a system of security, to be discarded when that system broke down. Whereas German diplomats and trade delegations were continually going to and fro in the Balkans, there was little official contact between the British Foreign Office and the newer European countries. Mr. Eden's visit to Warsaw and Prague in 1935 was one of the first signs of interest exhibited in these states, and Mr. Chamberlain's regrettable and ill-chosen words about the Czechs being a far-off people about whom we knew nothing were no doubt typical of the attitude of the British Government. Czechoslovakia and Poland were necessary factors in a balance of power; but when the balance was upset, as it was by the invasion of Austria and the capitulation of Munich, France,

at any rate, ceased to show any further interest in the welfare of the country which she was committed to defend.

Again, the official "neutrality" of France and Britain towards the Spanish Civil War, their fear of provoking Germany and Italy, were a direct incentive to those powers to redouble their intervention, which had for its result the discrediting of both nations as "democratic" powers. One cannot easily forget the ambiguous and vague answers of the then Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs when any awkward questions were asked about the war, questions for the most part based upon reliable information. The policy of non-intervention, in the form which it actually took, was one of an impossible and indefensible neutrality.

Another example was the attitude of Britain and America to the war in China. While deploring Japanese aggression, nothing was done, until it was too late, to prevent Japan from waging war. Had the embargo on trade with her, which was applied after the invasion of Indo-China, been introduced in 1937, there is little doubt that her stock of war materials would have been soon exhausted, for Japan depended on America and Britain for the greater part of her raw materials, especially oil, coal, scrap-iron, and aviation spirit. In the later stages of the conflict, of course, help was sent to China, but Britain and America still remained in economic contact with Japan, while America sold her important raw materials on the cash-and-carry basis. A united front against Japan would have destroyed one formidable and embarrassing opponent in the late war, but the powers preferred to be neutral to Japanese aggression.

The most conspicuous example of neutrality was the apparent indifference of the British Government to German rearmament, in spite of repeated warnings. Whether all the details in Ernst Henri's *Hitler Over Europe*, published in the early days of the Nazi regime, were accurate in all respects it is not possible to verify; but the author did possess information about Nazi rearmament plans which the British and French governments would have done well to take seriously. Mr. Churchill's warnings, too, went unheeded. The opportunity provided by Hitler's challenge to the Western powers in March 1936, too, was passed over; there was little enthusiasm in France for action, and the British Government seemed to think that the character of a regime exhibited in its internal affairs was of no interest to other powers. This was the last chance of successfully opposing Hitler, and no advantage was taken of it. A premium was put on armed lawlessness, even when the arms were not strong.

Even earlier, it can be maintained, during the days of the Weimar Republic, the democratic powers helped to bring on the crisis by omitting to encourage the growth of democratic forces, such as they were, in Germany. It is true that the Republic did not strike deep roots; that the army and the Civil Service were hostile, or at best unsympathetic, and that the relatively liberal-minded Stresemann, advocate of the policy of fulfilment of the treaties and co-operation with the ex-allies, was at heart an imperialist and nationalist; that the younger generation of Germans felt that the Republic had done nothing for them; that during its chequered life there was much corruption which it was disinclined, or unable, to check, such as the Sklarek and Barmat

and Kutisker scandals. All this may be true; but, at any rate since Lord D'Abernon ceased being British Ambassador in Berlin, little was done to strengthen the hands of the democrats. Dr. Rudolf Olden, biographer of Stresemann and formerly assistant editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, has in a little book *Is Germany a Hopeless Case?* rebuked British diplomats for being more interested in the society of the German upper classes and fashionable circles than in that of the more rough-and-ready democrats whose manners may not have been quite so elegant. Another illustration of this attitude was Lord Runciman's close association with the German and Germanized aristocrats in Czechoslovakia in 1938, and Professor J. B. Trend has made the same criticism of our diplomatic methods in Mexico.

As for the smaller European countries: the question has been often asked: What did they do to deserve such a fate? The answer is, of course, nothing at all. They endeavoured to maintain an impossible neutrality, adopting an attitude which was very correct and neither favoured the Western powers nor showed any obvious suspicion of the "assurances" so frequently given by the German Government, refusing to come to any political or military understanding with Britain or France. It may be true, as Dr. van Kleffens has maintained in his book *The Rape of the Netherlands*, that the inevitable destiny of Holland was to remain a neutral country, having, for historical and geographical reasons, no other choice. But her fate has been virtually what it would have been had she been in alliance with the West. In any case, the Oslo powers on one side and the Balkans on the other could have formed political defensive blocs, which might have been a means of protecting themselves against German encroachment and aggression. Even if the war could not have been avoided, its course would have been different. Had the League powers taken the Covenant and its implied principle of collective security seriously there is little doubt that the war would have been avoided, for its pre-history would have taken a completely different course. But they chose to be neutral.

Considered politically, the Second World War may be regarded as a nemesis on neutrality, on the desire not to be involved in anything unpleasant, on the false notion that the character of a government is no concern of other states. Morally, it is a nemesis on the Laodicean spirit, of being neither hot nor cold, on the refusal to strive honestly for the realization of international unity. Although the League of Nations was devised as a purely political instrument, it may be considered to express the impact of morality on politics in being an alternative to the immoral technique of the use of force for the purpose of settling international disputes: an acknowledgment that war as an instrument of national policy was wrong, and settlement by reason right. Yet there was not sufficient sense of the morality of politics in those who used it to prevent it from being little more than an ineffective sounding-box which reverberated to declarations and declamations but echoed little sincerity. With Germany temperamentally hostile, British official position largely indifferent, and French politics corrupt and invertebrate, this is not surprising; yet a degree of collaboration was achieved in economic matters through the International Labour Office which the supporters of the League as a political instrument might well have envied. It could have been a great and living

instrument of the will to peace had the great powers decided to make it work. That they did not was their own responsibility, and history will have severe judgment to pass on those who praised it with their lips but whose actions and policies were not based on the principles which they professed.

To criticize the neutrality of governments towards the first great instrument of peace, however, is not enough. As a rule, countries get the governments they deserve, and in democratic countries governments are, on the whole, dependent upon the mood of the electors; they are the product, though not wholly so, of public opinion, and excess of caution or inactivity is frequently attributed to the government's being unable to legislate "in advance of public opinion." Being dependent on it, it is too often afraid to display any initiative. To that extent public opinion, which is often to be identified with public apathy, is a drag on legislation; and on the other hand if the government waits for it to give a lead, this is unlikely to happen as the public is not in possession of the information necessary to the design and execution of policy. Public opinion may conceive general ends, if it is sufficiently interested in politics; in the absence of this, however, a government should take the initiative itself, for it is doubtful if the public is sufficiently interested in the ends of policy to demand that the government should pursue a certain course of action. Several of the inter-war British governments were so constituted that a strong pro-League policy seemed unlikely, but the unwillingness, or inability, of the public to make such a demand, was a reflection of the general popular indifference to the League, in spite of the influence of the League of Nations Union, which was limited chiefly to the middle class, and gained little support from the masses. The enlightened propaganda of the League of Nations Union made little headway among the people as a whole, and the Peace Ballot revealed a strong disinclination to endorse any policy likely to involve force. But this did not excuse the apathy of the government of the time. Rather did it provide an excuse for inactivity; for had there been an irresistible enthusiasm among the various sections of the population no doubt it would have been prevailed upon to give more than lip-service to the principle of collective security.

Interest in the League on the part of younger people, that is among those who were likely to be involved in any eventual war, was negligible: a dismal reflection of the declining interest in politics generally. The political scene in France during the ten pre-war years did not inspire confidence. Government was so lacking in strength, there was so much concern for a one-sided view of security, and politics were so corrupt, that it is difficult to see how the French public could have been roused into a unanimous support of the League as a practical factor in politics. A self-seeking individualism was the curse of French politicians and of French party politics. One has only to read M. Elie Bois' *The Truth on the Tragedy of France* and M. Henry Torres' monograph on Pierre Laval to see that the political life of France was thoroughly rotten. From 1933-38, those critical five years when the German menace should have been plain to all, France was incapable of producing any counter-spirit to this danger. Yet it was precisely during this period that a strong unified democratic opinion in France would have been of the greatest assistance in the maintenance of peace. Clemenceau and Poincaré have been frequently

abused by the more liberal-minded for their intransigence and lack of imagination; but had France been led by a Poincaré, or even a Briand, during those fateful years, and had the French people had less of the indifference of the peasant-mind to wider issues and had its unity not been broken by the futile conflict of the Left and the Right, the international scene might have been considerably brighter than it actually was.

The position of America as the other great democracy is less easy to sketch. Handicapped by the racial complexity of her national structure and by her great distance from the scene of European uncertainties, with her own enormous economic problems, she could not in all fairness be expected to display a profound understanding of the threatening situation across the Atlantic. The people of the Middle West cannot with justice be blamed for misunderstanding European affairs and for a misgauging of the dangers implicit in them as long as it is remembered how blind were the statesmen and the public of Britain, which was much closer to the scene. Yet the isolationists, whose influence appears to have been out of proportion to their number, were in much the same category as our Europeans who shouted Peace! Peace! when there was no peace. They were equally blind to the interdependence of nations and to the indivisibility of peace. Much has been made of the collapse of isolationism since the entry of Japan into the war; but isolationism meant refusal to take part in a war between other powers, not turning the other cheek when attacked oneself. A more definite attitude earlier might have dissuaded the Nazis from waging war at all; yet America should not be singled out for criticism for not waking up in time while the European nations were still asleep.¹ The inevitability of America's participation in the war does, however, reveal the blindness of those Americans who would not see the situation as it was, and who thought in terms of Main Street, unable to comprehend its seriousness either in the Far East or in Europe. While the isolationists would not countenance the participation of their country in a major war, evidence is lacking of any protests made against supplying Japan with munitions of war. Nemesis has overtaken them, too.

One could press further this brief analysis of the consequences of neutrality as exemplified in governments and peoples; but what has been said should suffice to point out that, if the Germans must bear the immediate responsibility for the war, and the whole of that responsibility, those who would not see the danger must share the negative responsibility in not intervening before the general conflict was precipitated. In political terms, the catastrophe of the Second World War was a judgment on the ramifications of this spirit of neutrality. Without seeing in it a judgment it is difficult to see its relevance to a rational order.

And in moral terms? Our attempt to discover meaning in the present world crisis of history cannot succeed if we limit ourselves to purely political categories of thinking, for the roots of action lie deeper than politics. If we do so the complex scene of the Second World War will no be more than an isolated spectacle, a senseless intrusion of another instance of colossal violence

¹ Important sections of the American Press, however, do not yet appear to have realized the significance of what has happened.

on to the stage of history; for apart from some moral interpretation history, involving as it does the conflict of human wills, the class of forces which are good and evil, cannot be seen to have meaning. Even the Marxist view of history does not extrude the moral element, in spite of the professions of its philosophers and apologists, for its fundamental postulate is not the biological struggle of classes as a reflection of an economic order or disorder, but the supreme need for social justice. Its deeper source of inspiration is moral passion: the passion for justice. Similarly the political nemesis of the present time is more than the result of inadequate political outlooks: it is a judgment on outlooks and policies which were morally wrong. The Old Testament or prophetic view of political catastrophe was that it was related to the moral order: a punishment inflicted on a nation guilty of idolatry, social corruption, and personal wrongdoing. We do not know what would have been the results of these great conflicts between the powers of the ancient world had the political structure of Israel been different, or had there been no continuous and decimatory war between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Nobody can say what might have been if men had acted differently. But this view of history gains in significance when it is realized that the great prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. flourished at a time when the political menace of Assyria was at its height, and that men such as Isaiah and Jeremiah possessed acute political insight as well as penetrating moral perception. Some of them were advocates of neutrality and of appeasement when their appeals failed; but there is much unanimity later in the Old Testament, which is a record of policies and opinions as well as religious development, as to the reasons for the success of Assyria and Babylon, and afterwards Persia. They could not separate the moral from the political in their contemplation of the happenings of their time. They were, perhaps, too ready to interpret everything, to see the hand of God in whatever happened, whether it was good or evil, so much so that they were often guilty of exaggeration, even of distortion, in seeing in *all* political catastrophe the expression of divine judgment. But this does not invalidate the general sanity of their claims, for it is difficult to see how history, that is the fruit of politics, can have meaning if the deepest springs of human action are excluded. There are few enlightened people to-day who, in the light of the happenings of the last years, fail to see in them a judgment on the violation of the principle of the organic interrelationship of nations.

This may help us to assess the importance of the moral factor in politics in our own time. Neutrality can then be seen to be a moral as well as a political attitude, comparable with the toleration of evil because one does not wish to be involved in conflict with it. If the refusal to recognize the principle of international solidarity, which is now being driven home with blood and tears, has been a political mistake of the first magnitude, behind it lies the deeper moral failure to perceive the principle of human fellowship as operative in the affairs of nations; the erection of national self-interest into a principle of policy, its identification with policy; an indifference to political evil; and an unwillingness to face the deeper character of political realities. The sin of Pilate was not only that of endeavouring to maintain an impossible neutrality in order not to cause offence to those over whom he had jurisdiction; it was

also that of being neutral towards good and evil because he did not want to make up his mind and to be disturbed.

In our time political nemesis is but an outward form of moral judgment.

Now, if democracy is to be the trustee for civilized values those who believe in it must learn this lesson. If freedom of speech, of thought, charity, gentleness, good taste, reverence for precious things, tolerance and good faith, and many other values which we believe to be necessary to a life of civilization and culture, are to be safeguarded for the people and by the people, the masses of all nations, including our own, will have to possess them and cherish them themselves; if they desire peace, they must "follow after the things which make for peace."¹ If the "senseless," the catastrophic and tragic element is to be extruded from human life, it will only happen when people learn that politics and morals are indissociable from each other, and that education of the spirit is the prior necessity of the democratic way of life. History, as something which seems to happen *to* men rather than something which they are instrumental in making, may be a baffling process; but as something which they create for themselves it is not outside their control if they are able to understand the forces which set it in motion and the nature of the principles which direct it; for the great movements of human life depend on what people desire, not, of course all people, but those who are strong enough to desire it at any given time. Persons, therefore, individually and in the mass, must know what they are choosing or what they are permitting others to choose, and whether what they choose is right. They cannot often control the policy of the government or oligarchy in which resides executive power, but unless they can decide what are the desirable ends of policy, and educate themselves to know what is morally as well as politically desirable, the basis of democracy crumbles and it ceases to have any justification beyond a purely statistical or quantitative one.

What has been sketched above does not claim to be an account of the causes of the Second World War or a detailed description of the series of events which led up to it; it only selects one significant factor, though a case may be made out for its being, in a negative manner, a determining one, in this series. The most notorious foreign policy of the century, usually known by the name of appeasement, and analysed convincingly in several of its aspects by Dr. Paul Einzig,² was but one outcome of this "neutral" attitude of mind, allowing the strong to continue their depredations without restraint and good causes to go by default. It is difficult to believe that, at any rate in the democratic countries, a less apathetic public opinion could not have played more part in the shaping of policy. At the present time, however, it appears that, in spite of their shortcomings, it is the countries with democratic traditions of government which are alone able to safeguard the continuance of civilized values. The future of civilization is in their hands; what they do with it depends on the rejuvenation of democracy and on a deeper and broader conception of the nature of democracy and of its spiritual foundations. But before examining the qualifications of the democratic powers to pose as the guarantors of civilization it may be advisable to inquire more closely into the nature of civilization and the dissemination of the values which constitute it.

¹ Romans XIV, 19.

² P. Einzig, *Appeasement Before, During, and After the War* (Macmillan, 1941).

Note to Chapter Two on "Historical Relativism" (which the "general reader" may omit if he desires).

Several references in the foregoing chapter may have indicated that some writers on history hold a view which may be described as historical relativism, which, as Mr. A. L. Rowse has pointed out in his *The Use of History* (English Universities Press, 1946), p. 140 ff., is a problem of great importance for historical thinking. He says, doubtless correctly, that no one in this country has yet dealt with it. Continental thinkers, however, have done so, among them Wilhelm Dilthey, Ernst Troeltsch, and Friedrich Meinecke in Germany, and Croce in Italy.

Meinecke, for example (*Die Entstehung des Historismus*, Munich, 1936, which may be translated as "The Rise of the Sense of the Historical," and *Vom Geschichtlichen Sinn und vom Sinn der Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1939—"Concerning the Sense of the Historical and the Meaning of History") identifies *Historismus* (a typical and clumsy German term) with relativism, to which he is opposed. *Historismus*, according to Meinecke, "has produced a relativism which sees in every historical scene, every institution, every idea and ideology nothing more than a passing moment in the unceasing flux of becoming. All things, according to it, have a relative value only." From such historical relativism spring inevitably "a tired scepticism, a despair of finding sense in the eternal flow of becoming and passing, so that the meaning of any historical scene may be invalidated by another equally plausible scene which conflicts with it." (*Vom Geschichtlichen Sinn*, p. 11). He sees three alternatives of dealing with this problem: firstly, that of the romantic's veneration of the past, as an example of which he refers to the Freiherr Vom Stein's enthusiasm for the ancient municipal freedom of German cities and the imperial power of the Middle Ages which inspired his political reforms; secondly, the futurism of the progressive idealist, who seeks historical fulfilment in some future historical moment, which again makes the present comparatively unimportant; and, thirdly, the "vertical" as opposed to the "horizontal" vision, in support of which he quotes Goethe (*Der Augenblick ist Ewigkeit*—"the present is Eternity") and Ranke's famous dictum "Each epoch is in immediate relationship to God (*jede Epoche ist unmittelbar zu Gott*)," sayings which draw us out of the "stream of movement" and suggest the presence of eternity in time and in the aspirations of individual men and of nations. Historical life looks "vertically," not, as the relativists would have it, "horizontally." This finding of the permanent in the temporal, Meinecke admits, is a paradox; but it is more intelligible than historical and ethical relativism. While admitting, too, that "the meaning of history in the universal sense is unknown to us," and that "we must distinguish from the absolute meaning of history that which it can have for us," he says that "all eternal historical values have their origin, in the last resort, in decisions made in the consciences of individual men of action." This, it would seem, brings us back again to relativism in its subjective form, for decisions taken as the result of individual conscience might still have no wider validity. Meinecke, however, understands by the term conscience (*Gewissen*) the organ through which speak "the higher historical powers—people, country, state, religion, etc.," in such a way that

society is protected from dissolution into the anarchy of individualism." He cannot exclude the metaphysical from his consideration of the historical: that is, historical validity derives from something suprahistorical, for conscience is "the most divine attribute in man (*das Gewissen als das Gottverwandteste in uns*)."

I do not propose to discuss Meinecke's thesis that historicism has its origins in the growing historical sense of the eighteenth century which passed over into the later historical relativism; the more learned reader may turn to Meinecke's *Entstehung des Historismus* and to Ernst Troeltsch's massive *Historismus und seine Probleme*: I only wish to point out that the question of relativism in historical judgments and in ethical values is of crucial importance to the approach of the problem of meaning in history. Mr. Rowse, I notice, does not consider historical relativism a satisfactory form of historical thinking, though he rejects any metaphysical basis for ethics. As a result of evolutionary theory, he says, the idea of God has been made superfluous; no help can come "the way of people like C. S. Lewis or for that matter Karl Barth," and he agrees with Professor Stebbing that we do not need God to assure us of the worth of love, kindness, tolerance, etc., for these values "emerge from, and rest upon, the positive experience of man in history."

History does, of course, reveal that each age has its own categories of judgment, its own "style," which it regards as valid for itself, and that these are not necessarily acceptable or valid for other periods; this is so obvious that there is scarcely any need to mention it. Each age has its own "spirit"; but it is difficult to see how history can be anything more than chronological successiveness if historical "periods" are not to be judged or approached in relation to some permanent principle which only a metaphysic of history can provide. The rejection of such a metaphysic may simplify, but does not solve, the problem, nor does it make the escape from historical relativism any easier.

Dilthey (1833-1911), who devoted much thought to the examination of the nature of history and historiography (especially in relation to what he called *Geisteswissenschaften*—"human studies") rejected the introduction of metaphysics into the study or interpretation of history, and in his *Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte* ("An Attempt to provide a Basis for the Study of Society and of History") denies that the philosophy of history and sociology can be sciences in the proper meaning of the term.

The philosophy of history, he says, originates "in the Christian idea of inner coherence through progressive education in the history of mankind" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1923, I, p. 90). He distinguishes between history and nature by saying that in the world of moral forces "the non-recurrent and unique have quite a different significance from that which they possess in external nature: they are to be understood not in terms of instrumentality but of conscious purpose; for the need on which they rest is indestructible and is indissociable from the highest in our being." Hence the historian prefers to deal with the extra-ordinary. But it is illegitimate, Dilthey continues, to regard such individuality or singularity as raw material for abstraction (i.e., the philosophy of history). The process of transforming

such material as is provided by the historian into the "pure gold" of abstraction in order to wrest from history its last secrets is as risky as is the alchemist's attempt to unearth the deepest secrets of nature. But why is the philosophy of history not a genuine science?

Firstly, its task, like that of sociology, is insoluble. The philosophy of history is "a theory which endeavours to perceive a coherent historical reality in terms of a corresponding coherence imposed by uniting various elements," but is nevertheless artificial. The philosophy of history provides a picture of humanity which has a certain emotional attractiveness, but "every formula in which we express the meaning of history is nothing more than a reflex of our own lively spirit (*ein Reflex unseres eigenen belebten Inneren*): even the power which the concept of progress possesses lies less in the thought of a purpose than in our experience of our own volitional conflict and in the happy awareness of that experience" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, I, p. 97). Indeed, the idea of the philosophy of history does not derive from historical studies but from theology (*ibid.*, I, p. 98, *cf.* III, p. 215 *ff.*) The individual does not behave as though he knows that history makes demands upon him; what a man experiences in his own soul is there *for him*, not for a world-process or for a social organism.

Secondly, the methods of a philosophy of history are false. Hegel's magnificent structure, for example, is unreal: his "Spirit" (*Geist*) is an "abstraction . . . a subject without place or time" (I, p. 104), and the resultant philosophy is "all metaphysical fog (*alles metaphysische Nebel*).¹" The methods are false because it is unnecessary to "interpret" history in terms of something less, i.e. metaphysics, that is, by importing something extraneous into the study of history. Whatever unity or coherence there is in history is that which is conferred by life itself, for "history is only life, conceived from the standpoint of the totality of mankind in the form of a coherent whole" (VII, p. 256). Life itself is the stuff of history. In his penetrating account of *The Eighteenth Century and the Historical World* Dilthey reserves his greatest admiration for Julius Möser, who rebelled against the eighteenth century's pride in the finality of its own standards and values and believed that "every age carries its own standards within itself" (III, p. 257).

From this point Dilthey enunciates his own view of historical relativism, a view which is found in various parts of his prolific writings. The great work on the *Critique of Historical Reason* was never completed, though he left a full sketch of the thought which it was to embody, and which was to include a criticism of Hegel's "intellectualization" of history (VII, p. 258: "A Plan for the Construction of the Historical World in relation to the Human Studies"—a section on "The Perception of Universal-historical Coherence"), which reveals an attitude, he says, completely different from that of the genuine historian.

I have not the space for a more detailed account of Dilthey's fascinating study of history: I can only indicate his conclusions, which he sets out in incomplete form in four brief propositions (VII, p. 290).⁽¹⁾ The concept of value emerges from life itself (and by "life" he means all mental and historical activity); (2) the standard for every judgment is to be found in the relative ideas of value, meaning, and purpose of any nation or period; (3) the philosopher's task is to explain how these came to be related to an

absolute; (4) and taken as a whole this means the complete recognition of the immanence of unconditioned values and standards in the historical consciousness (projected section on "The Problem of Values in History"). Dilthey sums up what he has so frequently said elsewhere in the following words: "The historical awareness of the finiteness of every historical event, every human or social condition, of the relativity of every kind of belief, is the final step towards the liberation of man. Through it man reaches the sovereign power to wrest from every experience its content, to give himself up to it completely and without prejudice" (VII, p. 290-1). This is his solution of the problem: are historical values finite or absolute? Do historical categories belong to the moment, or are they to be judged in relation to permanent and universally valid standards? No, Dilthey says; there are no absolute values or standards in history or for history, and to seek them is to misunderstand the task of history. This means (unless I am drawing false conclusions from his premisses) that any philosophy of history, such as is conceived in these pages (especially in the chapter on *The Interpretation of History in Contemporary Christian Thought*) is indefensible, and that a statement such as Berdyaev's that "the metaphysic of history teaches that what is insoluble within the historical framework may be solved outside it" (*The Meaning of History*, p. 206) cannot be justified. It will be seen that the theme of this book is that a historical relativism such as Dilthey's cannot offer an adequate account of human destiny, and that historical coherence (*Zusammenhang*, in Dilthey's sense) cannot be found without the introduction of something from without, in this case theology.

BOOK TWO — CIVILIZATION

CHAPTER I

CIVILIZATION: ITS NATURE AND DIFFUSION

I

HISTORY is, among other things, the record of the progress of civilization. To-day principles of life which have been believed in the West to form the basis of civilization are being challenged and threatened. It is no longer true that civilization can be extended by war, for modern warfare is its denial. The redirection of history will in future be achieved by means of the peaceful penetration of political and cultural ideas, not through the attempt to impose a certain way of life on others by resort to arms. And anti-democracy, as we have said, is destroying civilization; the only power left which is able, or shows any likelihood of being able, to save and conserve it, is democracy. The word "civilization" is being used here in its broadest and most positive sense; it is, however, of some importance to endeavour to understand what civilization is, including culture, which is sometimes identified with it, and usually considered to be a constitutive element within it.

At the beginning of this chapter, therefore, I am setting a few definitions of culture and civilization.

Culture or civilization is the development of a life essentially human, consisting not only of the material developments necessary to a proper life here, but also and above all moral development, the development of speculative and practical activities (artistic and ethical) which deserve the name human (Jacques Maritain, *Religion et Culture*).

Culture is the summary of all real advances of man and of society in all fields and in every direction in so far as these are subordinate to the spiritual fulfilment of the individual as being the real goal of progress (Albert Schweitzer, *Ethics and Civilization*, E. Tr.).

Civilization is the will to live together. . . . Barbarism is the tendency to dislocation (J. Ortega y Gasset, *La Rebelión de las Masas*).

Freud regards culture as consisting of

all those aspects in which human life has raised itself above animal conditions and in which it differs from the life of the beasts.

Culture and civilization are the same thing, consisting on the one hand of

all knowledge and power that men have acquired in order to master the forces of nature and win resources from her for the satisfaction of human needs; and on the other hand it includes all the necessary arrangements whereby men's relations to each other, and in particular the distribution of the attainable riches, may be regulated (*The Future of an Illusion*).

Civilization, broadly speaking, connotes the sum total of the activities of men, the various arts and crafts that they have invented, the means of intercommunication, and all that goes to make life richer and fuller (W. J. Perry, *The Growth of Civilization*).

The worth of men consists in their ability to persuasion. They can persuade and can be persuaded by the disclosure of alternatives, the better and the worse. Civilization is the maintenance of social order, by its own inherent persuasiveness as embodying the nobler alternative. The recourse to force, however unavoidable, is a disclosure of the failure of civilization, either in general society or in a number of individuals. Thus in a live civilization there is always an element of unrest. For sensitiveness of ideas means curiosity, adventure, change. Civilized order survives on its merits, and is transformed by its power of recognizing its imperfections (A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*).

Spengler, as is well known, distinguishes sharply between culture and civilization:

Every culture has its own civilization. . . . The Civilization is the inevitable destiny of the Culture. . . . Civilizations are the most external and artificial states of which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are the conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion, intellectual age and the stone-built, petrifying world-city following mother earth and the spiritual childhood of Doric and Gothic. (*The Decline of the West*, vol. II).

Civilization, for Spengler, is culture which has become hardened into a system, expressed in the contrast of soul and intellect. The transition from Culture to Civilization was achieved for the western world in the nineteenth century.

Briefly, these definitions and descriptions of civilization can be summed up as indicating that civilization has two main constituents: the external, or technical, and the inner or spiritual; the things which have to do with tools, and those which have to do with man's moral life.

The distinction between culture and civilization is not admitted by Schweitzer, the one being a German word (*Kultur*) and the other a French word for the same thing. One may speak, he says, of ethical or non-ethical culture, or of ethical and non-ethical civilization, but not of culture and civilization.¹ Yet culture may be considered in some respects as being more personal and unorganized than civilization, for the latter implies the embodiment of values and cultural traditions in a more enduring and "hardened" form. Maritain regards culture as expressing something more rational and moral, while the word civilization suggests the social and more precisely the political and institutional aspect of the same human development.² Schweitzer, again, refuses to regard material progress by itself as civilization, for it only becomes civilization in so far as the civilized mind lets it work in order to bring about the perfection of the individual and of society.³

It would therefore appear to be difficult, in the light of conflicting views about the distinction between culture and civilization, to speak of the two things in contradistinction to one another, though they are not quite the same. Culture can exist without civilization in the sense of imposed order and technology. There is a Jewish culture, but no Jewish civilization. It is possible to speak of Welsh culture, but not of Welsh civilization, for the intellectual and artistic and religious achievements of the Welsh people have not been consolidated by a special system of law and organization into an organic social-political unity. Welsh civilization is simply the civilization of Britain, though it might have been legitimate to speak of Welsh civilization before the Norman conquest of Wales, for Wales possessed, in the tenth century, its own legal code. Before the loss of Jewish independence and the destruction of the Jewish state the Jews could be said to possess their own civilization, which was theocratic in form. Civilization, then, is wider than culture in its scope: it is culture transmitted and then stabilized, its stabilization depending upon systematized theories of right and sovereignty, and upon the existence of technical achievement. It can also be said to embrace several

¹ *Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur*, Munich, 1925, p. 23.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 109.

³ *Civilization and Ethics*, pp. 5, 7.

different "cultures," imposing upon them its own forms and values. Chinese and Japanese culture and civilization differ greatly from those of the Western countries; but both have now come to be included within the ambit of Western civilization, even though they retain their own national cultures. In fact in common parlance nations can hardly be said to be civilized unless they have been permeated with the spirit of the West and have adopted the fruits of what is considered to be its material progress. But on the other hand a nation is judged to be civilized or otherwise by the values which it incorporates and expresses in its public life. In spite of advanced social legislation, its possession of a rich literary, musical and scientific heritage, there is a general disinclination to describe as civilized a nation which sets up concentration camps, practises racial discrimination, and machine-guns escaping refugees. That is, "civilized" behaviour implies conformity with certain generally accepted standards, universally applicable, which decent people are expected to acknowledge; civilization, or being civilized, is something more than the mere achievement of material success or technical efficiency. A person or nation which is aggressive, denying the Rights of Man, fair dealing, sanctity of treaties, repudiating humane values, is no longer worthy of being described as civilized; yet such a nation, whether it belongs to the East or to the West may be a logical exponent of Western "civilization," in the broad sense of the word, in so far as its life is based upon the typical expressions of modern Western culture: technology, rapid organization, the collective handling of economic resources, scepticism towards religion. If such things constitute "civilization" then paradoxically a civilized community can behave in an uncivilized manner, which suggests that our Western civilization contains the seeds of its own disintegration. This is largely because, being no longer theocentric, it has become inhuman; it has become first anthropocentric and in consequence mechanocentric, and this change has been accompanied by a catastrophic decline in human values. Turning back to the definitions at the beginning of the chapter, which were chosen at random, they are seen to agree in describing civilization as the sum total of the achievements of any society at any given time. Some civilizations (most, in fact) have already vanished, have been destroyed, or have failed to reach maturity. Yet even in the cases of those which have not survived, their contribution to world-history has been such that their influence has been felt all over the world. Many factors have been involved in their spread, and there is some division of opinion as to the manner and extent of their diffusion, as well as of their genesis.

The "Diffusionist" school, for example, maintains that archaic civilization originated in Egypt alone and from there was transmitted to all parts of the world. There was a time when societies were all food-collectors, living in a state of the most primitive culture. Then, in Egypt, the transition from food-collecting to food-producing began, owing to the initiative of an individual or individuals who possessed knowledge of Nile floods and of calendar changes and who were able to exercise complete authority over their subjects through possessing this esoteric knowledge. The evidence, this school claims, goes to show that this all-important step in food-producing and the institution of kingship took place in the Nile basin some four millennia before the Christian era. Professor G. Elliot Smith and Dr. W. J. Perry are the chief sponsors

of this theory, and claim to support it by adducing the necessary data. Through the invention of ships the Egyptian civilization spread to Crete, which in turn influenced Ionia and Athens. Egyptian architecture and sculpture were decisive factors in the evolution of Greek sculpture, they claim, which, through the invasion of India by Alexander the Great, in turn exercised its influence over Indian civilization. The Corinthian pillars of the Gandhara period (?B.C. 80-20) and the floral garland popular in the Greek architecture again testify to the influence which Greek forms exercised on alien civilizations. Hellenic-Egyptiac influence is said to have penetrated as far as Siberia via Scythia, and south-eastwards to Java and Indonesia, whence further expansion was made across to the Pacific islands and thence to America. Although experts on Central American civilizations maintain that they rose independently of external stimulus, the following case put forward by Dr. W. J. Perry and G. Elliot Smith is worth noting. The architecture of the Mayan and Peruvian societies shows little or no development: it is there all ready, as it were, and presumably imported from outside, in an advanced stage of florescence. The bass-relief from a stone altar at Copan, Central America, with its distinctive type of turban still said to be worn in the Malay Archipelago, and the grotesque face on the chest also found in figures sculptured on a ninth century temple in Java, together with a representation of what has been identified as an *Indian* elephant, also at Copan, suggest that Central America owes its aesthetic forms to contact with India, which is believed to have obtained them indirectly from Egypt. Professor Elliot Smith expresses the conviction that much of Indian culture is derived from pre-Hellenic Egypt and Babylon.¹ Dr. W. J. Perry, whose investigations also support the "diffusionist" theory of the growth and expansion of civilization, says that "there is no reason whatever to believe in the independent development of culture in different parts of the earth,"² and even goes so far as to suggest that the idea of kingship, of a ruling aristocracy in whom is vested supreme power, can also be traced back to the Egyptian institution. The theory of dynastic continuity points back through Teutonic to Celtic ruling families, who in turn derived a great deal from the Greeks and thence from Egypt,³ adducing evidence in support of it. The wide extent of systems of burials (the latter reaching as far as Britain) is held to be a proof of the spread of Egyptian culture, and the existence in Peru of pyramids and enormous megalithic monuments, pottery, jewelry, and mummification reproducing the main features of Egyptian art and customs, is supposed to be a further

¹ "There is no doubt that India derived a great deal of its earliest (pre-Hellenic) culture from Babylon and Egypt, and gradually assimilated these adopted customs and beliefs until there developed a new cultural compound distinct from Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations, and characteristic enough to receive the name "Indian." But during the centuries it took to effect this process, India was handing on to Indo-China the torch of Western knowledge before it had assumed its distinctly Indian form. Hence the Far-Eastern civilization preserves more definite traces of its original Egyptian and Babylonian inspiration than Indian civilization itself." This applies also to Indonesia, Oceania, and America, in whose early civilization contributions can be recognized as coming from India, Indo-China, Melanesia, Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean lands. G. Elliot Smith, *Human History* (Cape, 1930), pp. 491-2.

² *The Growth of Civilization*, (Methuen), Pelican ed. p. 142.

³ *Ibid.*, 179. Dr. Perry cites an old Hungarian document in which are found names of Attila's ancestors closely agreeing with a Chinese list of rulers going back as far as the sixth century, B.C.

demonstration of the extent of the influence of the original archaic civilization.

This view of the spread of civilization, however, is not everywhere accepted. Sir Leonard Woolley rejects the prior claim of Egypt to be the source of civilization, holding that of Sumer to be older, though this does not invalidate the theory championed by the "diffusionists": it only puts the source further back and makes the influence of the Sumerian rather than the Egyptian culture of supreme importance for the ancient world. Dr. W. H. R. Rivers and Professor V. Gordon Childe, however, accept the predominance of Egypt and its priority over the Sumerian civilization. Dr. A. J. Toynbee, who has his own theory about the genesis of civilizations, severely criticizes the contentions of Perry and Elliot Smith but without mentioning any significant facts which would discredit them. He stands by his own theory of challenge and response, the implication of which is that civilizations arose through responding to certain challenges: the Mayan civilization rose out of the American "Archaic Culture" in response to the challenge of the rain-soaked tropical forest; the Minoan was a response to the challenge of the sea, and so forth; but Dr. Toynbee is not free from the tendency to fit all historical changes, developments, decay and disintegrations into his own complicated and ingenious scheme.¹ Diffusion has played a rôle which cannot be ignored, he concludes, but which is not of capital importance. Yet it is through diffusion that the forces which have moulded modern civilization have permeated the world, whether they be the ideas of Greece or the technical achievements of the Industrial Revolution.

The world-wide extent of the technical aspect of Western civilization is an instance of the manner in which transforming forces have radiated out from one point in the globe, and of how a new world-era has been introduced. The machine civilization has been responsible for the major transformation of human conditions during the last two hundred years. Originally civilization was dependent upon the invention and use of tools; now it depends upon an elaboration of the tool, namely the machine; and though the intellectual history of the modern world is dominated by Hellenic culture and Roman law, and its moral evolution by the Hebraic-Christian factor, its present phase is the result of the supplanting of these spiritual constituents by the extension of the sphere in which the machine is predominant. To that extent is Spengler right when he advises the men of the rising generation to dedicate themselves to technics, and in doing so he is expressing in a decisive form the tendency of the modern spirit, for the influence of the machine during the last two centuries has been the dominating force giving direction to Western civilization. The 1851 Exhibition was thought of as the high-watermark of human progress ninety years ago; but as a display of achievement it was different almost in kind from a modern exhibition illustrating technical advance. The modern age is symbolized by chrome steel, sky-scrapers, the delicate accuracy and clean simplicity of instruments designed for meticulous measurement; the speed and slickness of streamlined vehicles for transport; the neatness and shine of a hospital operating theatre; bakelite and synthetic resin; "buna" and "lanital," artificial silk, functional architecture, turbines, power-stations; and neon lighting. The civic occasion graced by the presence of the mayor

¹ See *A Study of History*, Oxford, 193, I, pp. 423-440.

and the local Member of Parliament is not the opening of a church but of a cinema, and home music has given place to the radio. The civilization which is represented by these and other similar things has spread over the whole world; there is little to distinguish Tokio and Shanghai from Chicago and Buenos Aires. The same kind of modern buildings are erected in Prague, Pittsburgh, and Moscow. Superficially national characteristics seem to have been obscured by functionalism, by the utility factor, so that in some ways the world has been smoothed out into a flat uniformity.

The modern world in its most characteristic manifestations is not the product of Christian civilization, though its main features could not have emerged without a Christian background. Scientific investigation, for example, was as much the result of the liberation of the mind from fear of nature as of the humanistic aspect of the Renaissance. It is, of course, not the result of any one factor by itself, but that it is not chiefly the result of the Christian tradition is illustrated by the fact that Russia, where technical efficiency has become the chief purpose of social evolution, is actually anti-Christian, and has based her conception of human life on systematic godlessness. Perhaps the best term for describing the modern phase of industrial civilization is "Americanism," which for Keyserling is Western civilization in its most thoroughgoing form, standing for mass-production, and generally speaking the substitution of financial-industrial for cultural-human values. Although all the European races have combined to build up the North American continent, the cultural refinements which have characterized the lands from which they came are curiously absent: literature, art, music, though more has been achieved in the world of letters than of art. The best-known names in American music are the composers and purveyors of dance music, and George Gershwin, who composed symphonic jazz. American painters of repute can be counted on the fingers of one hand; and the greatest contribution of America in architectural form is the sky-scraper, the symbol of functionalism. Many of our mechanical contrivances, such as the telephone, the gramophone, automatic food machines, incandescent mantles and a host of other familiar articles, are of American origin. They belong to the very life of Western civilization in the first half of the twentieth century, and they have been sent to the uttermost parts of the earth. The cinema has perhaps been the most influential agency in the process of westernization, not always with desirable consequences. In fact the impact of Western civilization upon the Eastern races has done the East untold harm without doing the West a corresponding amount of good.

Gustav Adolf Gedat, who was at one time a leading figure in the German Student Christian Movement, describes in his book *Ein Christ erlebt die Probleme der Welt* a world-tour which he undertook in 1933-34 and the disturbing thoughts which came into his mind as he saw the results of Western commercialism in the Far East. Writing about the impact of the West upon Java he says:

The gramophone is playing everywhere. I have nothing against a gramophone, for I possess one myself and I enjoy having it. But do we know what happens when a gramophone is sold out there?

With amazement people sit round this astonishingly simple thing. Why should one trouble to play oneself? So indigenous music perishes, and with it a piece of native culture.

The gramophone enters upon its victorious campaign. But one brings of course records which can be put on, and that creates a roaring trade for the Western gramophone industry. So to-day the most modern jazz from London, Paris and Hollywood is played everywhere. Playing by itself, however, is not sufficiently satisfying: they have seen how the white people do things, how they cling to each other to the sound of this music, pressed close to one another and striding and swaying through the overheated hall. So the natives begin to dance to the tune of the gramophone, and now they can no longer do without it."

Hitherto, Gedat observes, the dance was part of religious worship; now it is no more than a business affair.

"They dance in halls roofed with corrugated iron in which a stuffy atmosphere oppresses the dancers. Cigarette smoke fills the air. American tobacco firms give away millions of packets free, so that the Asiatics may get used to the habit and provide a market for the products created by this industry.

"Do we here in Europe understand what this new kind of dance means to a people who are already strongly sexual by nature? Religions go to pieces, moral restraints are burst asunder, and from the contact of East and West there remains only a chaos of collapsed cultures."¹

The same kind of disruptive influence, the writer continues, is exercised by the cinema: false notions of Western ideas are propagated, and the Javanese (or Indians or anyone else) are corrupted by the picture of the Western underworld which is unfolded before them: smugglers, gangsters, bribed policemen, mistresses and prostitutes. The diffusion of the technical achievements of the West, when divorced from moral considerations, is in innumerable ways a plague and a danger.

In Africa the picture is similar. Describing the impact of Western industrialism on Central Africa, Mr. Basil Mathews writes:

"He (the African labourer) goes to eat and sleep and rest in the compound. He tastes strange forbidden fruit. The mysteries of gambling, the lure of the uproarious company in the beer-hall, passing liaisons with girls who neither give him nor demand from him loyalty or love but only ask for a bit of his wages, the very fact that he has in his pocket that strange new tool of power, the round bits of shining metal that are called 'money'—all these cut into the old loyalties. He discovers the great variety of clothing that money can buy; he buys clothes for his wife; and a gramophone with jazz records, cigarettes, a mirror, a safety razor. He meets men from every part of Africa. In the copper mines more than thirty languages are spoken by men from every area within five hundred miles and more. Bewildered, confused, shaken from his ancient moorings, the youth loses his bearings. He often floats derelict like flotsam and jetsam on the sullen tides of commercialism. Frequently his experience at the mines means the destruction of the best that he has known or been and the putting on of the worst that lies around him. When he left home he was a part of the soil of Africa; now he begins to become an arid, wind-blown atom of sand. The old life jostles against the new in his now divided personality."²

Such is the disintegrating effect of the West upon non-Western cultures. That, of course, is not the whole story. The efforts of medical missionaries to place the highest achievements of modern science at the disposal of primitive people; the combating of tsetse fly and fever by scientific methods; the spread of knowledge and the manufacture of cheap goods; the introduction of methods of transport and communications: these have to be put down on the credit side; but it is questionable if they outweigh the damage done by the corrosive effect of industrial expansion accompanied by Western "civilization." The impact of the *Kulturvolk* upon the *Naturvolk* has not been to the benefit of the latter. But as a historical fact of the most far-reaching significance the universal spread of Western civilization must be recalled

¹ *Ein Christ erlebt die Probleme der Welt*, Stuttgart, 1935, pp. 95-6. (*A Christian Looks at World-Problems*.)

² Basil Mathews, *Consider Africa*, Livingstone Press, 1935, p. 13.

as the major determining factor of the modern world. It has been irresistible, in many ways demonic in its overwhelming power, terribly destructive in putting at the disposal of all nations the annihilating instruments of modern warfare, so that Japan is able to make a desert of China just as European nations have made deserts of part of Europe.

Again, as Dr. Toynbee has pointed out, the impact of Industrialism combined with democracy (actually, in the West, intimately related to the rise of industrialism) upon "parochial sovereignty," upon nationalism, has had disastrous results, and is one of the most conspicuous features in the process of the disintegration of civilizations. Far from being the liberating, expansionist force which it promised to be about 1860, industrialism has now gone in the opposite direction and has been instrumental in the autarchic development (or retrogression) of nations. Whereas industrialism should have contributed to the abolition or limitation of sovereignty, during the last half-century, the "driving force of Industrialism like the driving force of Democracy, has been diverted from building a world order into fortifying the political parochialism of our Western society."¹ It is but one more example of how "history" has taken a wrong direction, and of how, if there is no sufficient ethical counter-balance, the factors which give drive to history also sow the seeds of their own self-destruction. The nemesis of a non-ethical civilization is totalitarian war, the most terrible thing which the perversity of the human mind has succeeded in devising.

In relation to modern culture the effect of the machine has been two-fold. In the first place, by making possible the reproduction of works of art, and by the large-scale production of books and newspapers, it has made more available for large numbers of people information which would not otherwise have come to them, and encourage the development of taste in a manner which had previously been denied. The transmission of music over the radio and talks upon innumerable topics have placed within the reach of the average man a means of education which should have far reaching effects on social life. On the other hand, the same process has made for imitativeness and the standardization of taste. Millions listen-in to the same jokes, the same dance tunes, the same nauseatingly sentimental songs; millions see the same films, hear the same crooning, watch the same actors and ape their manners and appearance; the result being a decline in the demand for stage plays and for the public performance of music. So the machine has led to the search for satisfaction in externalities.

"The possibility of realizing what is good externally," Keyserling wrote, "makes us superficial, for where this opportunity exists man grows accustomed to expect all his solutions from external circumstances, and neglects his own culture correspondingly."²

Without sharing Count Keyserling's enthusiasm for Eastern culture, we can admit that he has laid his finger on a vital spot in our modern weakness. The modern man has little time or inclination for reflection: the result is that he suffers from an inner dissatisfaction, which an attachment to external things fails to destroy. He wants to be on the move continually, and his great passion is to watch something else which is on the move, for example, the

¹ Op. Cit., vol. IV, p. 170.

² Hermann Keyserling, *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* (Jonathan Cape), vol. II, p. 265.

electric hare. He seems to have little desire to consolidate his inner life and to seek some guiding principle which will give him sure ground on which to stand. This shifting of emphasis from the human to the non-human, the spiritual to the external, has also resulted in the increasing abstractness of art and music. Surrealist painting and sculpture and the application of abstract or geometrical design to art have removed from it all soul-content, thereby widening the gap between the art-object and the perceiving subject.¹ Much of modern music makes no appeal to the emotions; and even to intelligent listeners it is little more than noise and dissonance: harmony and melody as understood in the past are of minor importance or are completely negligible. Even in the most "inner" of all cultural activities the disruption of the human soul seems to have resulted in the dehumanizing of communication. Not only has art in its advanced modern forms ceased to have roots in a spiritual world-view, as during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but it no longer appeals even to the emotions or to the imagination. Art, somehow, has become disembodied: it is a result of what Dr. Toynbee calls "schism in the soul": a symptom of disintegration.

CHAPTER II

CIVILIZATION: THE DIFFUSION OF
CULTURE

I

WE have considered so far the diffusion of civilization in two aspects: firstly a theory of the transmission of civilization in its archaic and incipient form, and secondly the spread of Western-technical culture, together with some of its consequences.²

There are, however, other forms of diffusion which should be briefly examined before we return to the relation of ethics to civilization.

In the first place the religious factor has been an important means of spreading culture, religion and secular culture interacting in such a way as to make it difficult to decide which is the more potent.

The secular culture of the ethnic religions is barely distinguishable from the religions themselves, as they are bound together in an organic, integrated whole. One of the most striking instances of this is Hinduism, in which the social structure is inseparable from the religious basis of Hindu society. The religions have in turn influenced the artistic life of the people who profess those religions. Buddhist art, for example, has its origin in religion, and the development of pictorial art in Japan was originally dependent upon the spread of Buddhism; though the work of the great masters of the colour-

¹ Cf. the present (Dec. 1945) controversy in the Press about the artistic worth of Picasso's work.

² For a fuller discussion of the relation of technics to culture see Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, Routledge, 1934.

print of a century ago—Hiroshige, Hokusai, Utamaro, Kunisada, and others—left the religious framework, like modern art in the West. The earliest Indian frescoes, the Ajanta frescoes at Hyderabad, depict the life of the Buddha during his previous incarnation. The resemblances between Chinese and Japanese art are due to a similarity of religious cultures having a common root in an Indian origin: it was from India, carried by Buddhist missionaries, that certain features of the artistic technique of the two nations derived. The Far Eastern countries are an outstanding example of the inter-relation between religion and culture and of the transmission of the cultural element by means of the religious factor.

The most familiar instance in the West of the influence of religion on culture is the achievement of the Moslems in Spain. Moslem mass-movements into other parts of the world spread similar results, for all over Asia, Southern Europe, and India was diffused the type of architecture which had an Arabo-persian origin. The conquest of Persia by the Arabs in the year 642 was an epoch-making event in the spreading of artistic and religious culture. The Taj Mahal, so utterly different from Hindu architecture, is probably the highest watermark of Moslem culture in India. Persian art became an important factor in seventeenth century India through the influence of the Mogul emperors. The Moorish civilization of Southern Spain was the most brilliant, prosperous, and scholarly in Europe during the Middle Ages and the period immediately preceding them, reaching its highest level during the Caliphate of Abdurraman III (912-961). It was the one bright spot in that period of cultural sterility. Many centuries passed before the Christian kingdoms which replaced it could compete with its achievements. The Moslems of Spain were on the whole tolerant of Christianity: far more so than were the Christians of Mohammedanism; and their achievement in architecture and in the fine arts are still the glory of the Western nations. In conjunction with that of the Jews the Moslem culture of Spain was far in advance of that of the rest of Europe in medicine, mathematics, and booklearning and philosophy. The Moslems introduced paper into Europe, and during the tenth century Cordoba was the most civilized city in Europe. During the thirteenth century Averroes, Maimonides and Ibn Jubayr, the famous traveller, pursued their scientific and philosophical and exploratory work. With the Christian *Reconquista* Moslem learning spread more rapidly. Toledo was retaken in 1085, Cordoba in 1236, and Seville in 1248, each recapture causing a wider diffusion of Moslem culture and an extending of its influence, until the philosophical schools of Toledo, for example, became famous throughout Europe. It was Moslem influence which made Spain architecturally so different from any other Western country: Toledo is even to-day a semi-oriental town, with its narrow winding streets, small-windowed houses, Moorish walls and turrets. To reach the city from the station you cross the Tagus by a bridge built by the Moors in the ninth century, one tower of which is still standing, or was standing until the outbreak of the Civil War of 1936. The Alcazar in Granada and the Great Mosque in Cordoba are still among the wonders of European art. But not only in the south was Moslem architecture the prevalent type: even as far north as Burgos there can be seen what is known as Mudéjar architecture: the work of Moslem

subjects of Christian kings. Even on modern Spanish music the plaintive music of the East has left its mark: it is clearly distinguishable in the work of Albéniz, Granados and Falla, and even more so in the *granadinas*, *malagueñas* and *cante jondo* of Spanish popular music; while a very large portion of the modern Spanish language consists of words which are no more than transliterations from the Arabic and some of which have become incorporated in the everyday language of Western nations. Spain had really two golden ages: one under the Moslems and the other under the Catholic rule. The first produced science and architecture and scholarship, the second literature, painting, and imperialism. The first was more or less tolerant, the second oppressive and intolerant in the extreme, productive of the most inhuman and un-Christian organization known to civilized Europe: the Spanish Inquisition.

Through Moslem scholarship the work of Aristotle was made familiar to Western Europe; and the distinguished Spanish Arabist, Professor Miguel Asín y Palacios, has traced the influence of Moslem thought on the finest product of Medieval Catholic culture: the *Divina Commedia* of Dante.¹

A reference to the Jews should be made as another example of the religious transmission of culture, though there is no extra-Palestinian civilization in the sense that there is an extra-Arabian Moslem civilization.

The influence of the Jewish factor on Western civilization has been immense; for it has been chiefly instrumental in providing the West with its own religious-ethical system. The Hebraic element was very strong in the Protestant Reformation, particularly in Calvinism, and through the Puritan outlook came to exercise a decisive effect on Britain and America. The Jews, too, played an important rôle in the preparation for the Renaissance, for Greek thought, in many cases, reached the West in translations from the Arabic made by Jewish scholars. Jewish translators, in fact, exercised much influence on the progress of Western thought in many ways. Ben David's translation of the work of Muhammad ibn Musa al Kwarazmi into Latin, for example, has been said to have laid the foundation of modern mathematics, and Dr. Leon Roth has seen in the scientific theory of relativity, in the working out of which several Jews have been concerned, a mathematical expression of the anti-anthropomorphic tendency of Jewish thought.² In philosophy Jewish influence has been conspicuous from Maimonides to Spinoza and Hermann Cohen, and there is something of the Hebraic in the severity of Kant's emphasis on the ultimacy of the moral law. Judaism has, moreover, much to say in the evolution of Western law, especially in its influence on Grotius, who sought light on natural law in the Biblical idea of right. Biblical sanction and rabbinical institutions, too, gave form to the constitution of the church. The ancient traditions of Jewish scholarship and rabbinical instruction have contributed to the production of men who in all fields of human activity have achieved distinction out of all proportion to their number. Even discovery, if the thesis ingeniously expounded by Señor Madariaga in his brilliant biography of Columbus is accepted, that Columbus was a *Marrano*, a Christian Jew, owes one of the greatest moments of its history to the enterprise

¹ M. Asín y Palacios, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, E. Tr. (Murray).

² *Jewish Thought in the Modern World*, in *The Legacy of Israel*, p. 469.

of a Jewish family.¹ Jewish restlessness, brilliance of mind, and tenacity have given much to the world in the realms of finance, art, industry, and organization.

The Jewish factor was transmitted through emigration and a natural propensity for commerce, as in the Roman world, and in Central and Eastern Europe maintained and intensified by persecution and the enforced encouragement of rabbinic learning as a training for the mind. The Jewish school, the inevitable concentration upon and development of Jewish culture in lands which had forced the Jews into the ghetto², and their persistent loyalty to their faith and racial traditions, their awareness of belonging to a race apart, all co-operated as factors producing a unique culture which the Jews took with them wherever they went. Where persecution relaxed or was non-existent, as in southern Spain during the brilliant period of Moslem ascendancy under the caliphate of Abdurraman III, the Jews were able to indulge their intellectual and commercial interests without interference; and when persecution supervened and drove them out of the land where they had lived for generations, as was the case during the reign of Isabella and Ferdinand of Aragon at the end of the fifteenth century, they emigrated with their culture and religion. Because Judaistic ethics were rooted in the Bible, Jewish culture was an integral culture, and, because of the place occupied by the Torah and the Talmud in Jewish life, was regarded as one of the curiosities of European life.

It is not easy to assess the peculiar contribution made by the Jews to the culture of the West because it was chiefly a culture *apart*, never fitting into the life of the people among whom they settled. Politically the Jews have not indented themselves with any special tendency. Many Jews have been devoted to radical thinking and have become communists or prominent leaders of Left thought, from Marx and Lasalle to the present day. In England, however, they have found liberalism more congenial; and the founder of the old German Conservative Party was a Jew Stahl. If the Jews can be said to have made a contribution of outstanding character to the ethical-intellectual life of the West, it may be in the idea of righteousness, or righteousness combined with a passionate yearning for justice (*Gerechtigkeit*, to use the more comprehensive German word). This conception is deeply rooted in the Old Testament, above all in the great prophets whose belief in God as Justice represented an advance of the first importance in the history of religion; justice being an attribute of God and also a desirable and right quality in individual and social life. This is particularly the case in the denunciations of social corruption which Amos inflicted upon his contemporaries. On the purely social plane the urgent demand for justice had its fullest and most politically potent expression in Karl Marx, in whom the resentment of generations came to life with dynamic and prophetic power. In modern times the passion for justice has received in literature embodiment on a truly massive scale in the novels of Jakob Wassermann (1873-1934)³ who was himself acutely conscious (as was Rathenau) of the tension in the Jewish soul, a tension

¹ S. de Madariaga, *Columbus* 1939.

² For details of education in the Jewish school see Milton Steinberg, *The Making of the Modern Jew*, p. 82 ff. (Routledge, 1934).

³ Especially in *The World's Illusion*, *The Maurizius Case*, *Wedlock*, *The Little Goose-man*.

which is reflected both in his autobiographical work¹ and in his fiction.

Whereas the Hebrew prophets saw in history the manifestation of a divine righteousness, an inescapable personal and social Justice, Wassermann, the Jew *malgré lui*, saw in Justice not a theological principle (he showed distaste rather than liking for Judaism), not a theistic interpretation of the moral order, but a principle immanent in life itself, representing one of the most fundamental longings of human nature. Marx's great desire for social justice was quite as devoid of religious content; but each, the one in the literary and the other in the political-economic sphere, was a true representative of a race whose insistent ambition was to achieve that freedom in which injustice is overcome. The Day of Atonement, the *Yom Kippur*, is one of the central festivals of the Jewish year; and this principle of Atonement, the demand for it, runs with dynamic force through the work of these two great modern Jews. In Marx it took the form of the demand for atonement for wrong done to the socially oppressed; in Wassermann it frequently emerges as realization of the need for atonement for the sin against life and against the spiritual being of the individual.

The history of the Jewish people has been the history writ large of the tension and maladjustment which was so pronounced in Wassermann, and which he has so pathetically described in his autobiography, *My Path as German and Jew*. Dwellers in every land, they have national roots in none; yet their fate has compelled them to develop a consciousness which overleaps national boundaries, resulting in an enviable cosmopolitanism and an unusual degree of adaptability: two factors of importance which would be a blessing to nations whose limited national outlooks have been the cause of the major disturbances in modern history. While remaining, in a sense, apart from the states of which they are citizens, the Jews, because of their strange and baffling destiny, can teach nations much in the transcending of national barriers without at the same time losing their own distinctiveness. Such is the paradoxical lesson which the diffusion of Jewish culture can teach the modern world; and in addition their resilience, versatility, and capacity to endure unparalleled persecution witness to the greatness of an integrated culture which is ultimately founded upon a theistic ethic. For Judaism in its orthodox sense is a coherent whole: law, ethics, religion, and scholarship are all bound together in an organic unity. The modern, westernized Jew, sharing the modern spirit in as great a degree as any other Western European, may be unaware of his cultural inheritance and may regard the religious practices of his people as obsolete, with no place in the contemporary world; but it is nevertheless there, and he is stronger when he feels that he is part of his people's culture.

The history of the Jewish people and their culture is the most remarkable known example of the ability of a small race to carry its traditions with it to all parts of the world and to remain loyal to its cultural heritage and also to influence other peoples in a significant manner.²

¹ "Fate had nevertheless made me a Jew, that is to say, had ordained me to be a person who staked all on his success in achieving equilibrium between the flesh and the soul, life and its survival; is it therefore to be wondered that the idea of justice hangs over him like an azure flame." (*Selbstbetrachtungen*, Berlin, 1933, p. 102.)

² See further on the subject of the Jewish factor Cecil Roth, *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization*, Macmillan, 1938.

The historical importance of the Jews has often been noted.¹ Prof. John Macmurray, for example, has developed the interesting thesis that the Western (non-Jewish) peoples find it impossible to accept the Jews because the Hebrew consciousness is essentially unitary, whereas that of the "aryan" peoples is dualistic; that is, for the Hebrew there is no opposition of thought and action: the Hebrew has achieved the complete unity of action and reflection. The secular and the spiritual are not two separate spheres of experience but one. In the life of the Western peoples there is no integral culture as there is in the Hebrew tradition. The distinction which we make between ethics and apocalyptic is therefore, for the Jew, an unnatural one, for it presupposes the dualism of which Hebraism is a virtual repudiation. In fact, the truth of Hebrew (Christian) ethics depends upon the truth of apocalyptic.² As long as the West rejects the specifically Hebrew contribution to civilization, namely, this repudiation of dualism, it is "incapable of thinking religiously and so realizing the integrity of life and the unity of the world." Yet it is only through so thinking that the purpose of history can be fulfilled.

I do not propose to examine this thesis and its elaboration: suffice it to say that there is a good deal of truth in it. Prof. Macmurray has performed a service in emphasizing the futility of thought without practice; in this he is pointing out what is one of the major principles of Communist philosophy: the unity of thought and action.³ The concrete thinking of the Hebrews is strikingly in contrast with the speculative character of Greek philosophy. God is not the Unchanging, He is the Creator (a worker, as MacMurray has noted); the prophets do not speculate about the nature of God or about man's moral duties, theories of behaviour, and so on. They say, *Thus saith the Lord*. They do not say: You ought to do this or that. They say: This is the judgment of God upon what you do. The implication of their theology is not the interpretation of life in the light of certain abstract principles or in terms of philosophy (as in Hegelianism or other forms of philosophical idealism) but the *fact* that history is the scene of divine judgment. The word of God is not the Greek *logos*, the divine reason of Stoic and Alexandrine philosophy; it is *dābhar*, the thing said or uttered; not a *logos spermatikos*, (a "Seminal word"), but "In the beginning God *made*." God deals with a particular nation, not with "mankind" in general, as an abstract concept; He is revealed through certain acts and facts in history. He guides His people, rebukes them, passes judgment upon them, throws them into the vortex of world-politics, threatens them with destruction, redeems them, promises them the Messiah. The same kind of feeling for the concrete is found in the teaching of Jesus, who does not enunciate theories of morals but tells men what they must do. If a man wants to inherit eternal life he must sell all his goods, or practise good neighbourliness, not just assent to a creed or a philosophy. As in orthodox Judaism, religion and life were for Jesus one comprehensive whole.

¹ By Berdyaev, Soloviev, and Niebuhr, among others. See also, H. G. Wood, *Christianity and the Nature of History*, (Cambridge), p. 110, ff.

² *The Clue to History*, Ch. 2, and 50 ff.

³ Cf. Marx (I quote from memory): "Die Philosophen haben versucht, die Welt zu interpretieren; es kommt aber darauf an, sie zu verändern. (The philosophers have tried to interpret the world; the chief thing, however, is to change it)."

It is through Jesus, through Christianity, that the Hebrew contribution to civilization has been most fully made, and the rejection of Jesus by the Jews does not alter this fact; indeed, the rejection of Jesus by both Jews and Gentiles has, throughout history, resulted in the most drastic consequences both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. Judaism has, in spite of its own peculiar cultural life, remained in a static state, from which not even the cautious attempts of Liberal Judaism have been able to rescue it.

It is through Christianity, not through the survival of Judaism, that the Hebrew values have been diffused, for the latter has been limited by being the faith of a single people, even though this people is scattered throughout the world as no other people has ever been. The momentous words of the prophets have been made known not through the synagogue, but through the Church, and the devotional literature of the Old Testament as well as the great moments of its history have become the possession of all races not through the Jewish Diaspora but through the missionary dynamic of Christianity. Such is one of the greatest ironies of history.

Judaism refused to become universal; it remained the expression of the life of a people; that for which it stood achieved universality through the faith which Judaism rejected. It is through the Gentile that the world has entered into the Jewish heritage.

It is, however, through Judaism, even though indirectly, that there has come into the world the force which alone, in the long run, is able to interpret history in terms of the most fundamental unity: that of spirit. It is true that world-unity, world-history, can only be realized fully on the practical level: that is through the coming of a commonwealth which can be described and maintained in social-political terms (corresponding to the Hebrew idea of theocracy); but the inspiration of historical achievement does not come through the practical in the first place but through the idea. The practical is but the transposition of the idea into an apprehensible dimension. The very phrase "unity of thought and action" presupposes an initial separation of thought and action until the moment of their coalescence. The truth is that there are different historical levels: there are the levels of thought and of action, the levels of spiritual perception and of concrete ethical actuality. There is the *idea* of history as the continuous creative activity of God, and the historical reality of the sovereignty of God as experienced in the life of the individual and of the Christian community. For the Hebrew prophetic consciousness there was, as has been said, no division between the ideal and the real, between God conceived ontologically and the cosmic consequences of His being. Those who do not live and think in the prophetic tradition cannot accept this unity as a fact of experience but as a concept which has to be translated into actuality. That is, perhaps, as Prof. Macmurray says, because the Western mind is so made that it can only think dualistically. However that may be, the problem of the translation into action of the ideas which constitute a religion remains unsolved.

This, however, does not affect the enormous contribution of the Jews to the spiritual life of mankind. As they rejected the Messiah when he came, so the West has repudiated the Hebrew view of the world by rejecting the only spiritual basis on which civilization can endure in the modern world;

for only in so far as the universal values of Hebraism (incorporated and transfigured in Christianity) are embodied in historical actuality can man escape the judgment of God. That is still the message of the Old Testament; it is still, and will remain, the message of Christianity.

The intellectual basis of Western civilization is not only Greek and Roman; it is Hebrew, for without the knowledge of the sovereignty of God the Creator man could not have arrived at a conception of reality of such a kind as to make science possible. Man, in primitive religion, feels himself subordinate to nature, and while this feeling, and together with it fear of nature, exists, he cannot objectively investigate the character of the external world. The mental background created by Biblical religion, both of the Old Testament and of the New, has been the leading factor in making possible the scientific view of the world. The truth of this is not affected by the popular view that science and religion are opposed to each other, which is an error arising from the view that Christianity is committed to the Biblical account of creation.¹

And while not underestimating the Greek contribution to scientific method, science as it is understood in the modern world developed in an atmosphere in which the Greek and Hebrew spirits fused: that is, in Christendom. The Hebrew conception of history differed from the Greek in that it was regarded as the sphere of God's living activity, in which Eternity was active and potent in the dimension of Time; the Greek considered the Eternal as the Unchanging, whose proper realm was not action so much as contemplation. The world is not something existing in its own right, created for a definite purpose by God, but, for Plato, a "copy" of some intelligible pattern. Through the world God is creating, for the Hebrew, a concrete sphere of activity; the world of nature (as for example, in the Book of *Job* and some of the Psalms) is His creation standing over against man, man is not one with it, united to it or subordinate to it in some mystical sense, nor is nature, on the other hand, the object of reverence or fear because God is to be found *in* it. Old Testament religion is uncompromising in its condemnation of syncretistic or nature-worshipping religion. Hence, though the work of the Creator God, nature is a sphere in which the human intellect is free to exercise itself.

Hebrew civilization did not produce scientists; its typical characters were Jeremiah, Amos, Isaiah, Job, in the realm of the spirit, who are in complete contrast to Euclid, Anaxagoras, Archimedes, and Aristotle; but the course of history has shown that not until the Greek spirit was blended with the Hebrew were the conditions created which made possible the growth of empirical science, for which both the logical-speculative and experimental mind on the one hand and the realist-historical on the other were necessary. Hence through the preservation of the Hebraic tradition in Christianity the Hebrew spirit has in its state of diffusion been of supreme historical value in contributing to the rise of modern civilization. Through modern Protestantism, too, it has created conditions advantageous to the development of industry: the great industrial and commercial nations of the modern world have been those where that form of Christianity has been practised which was inspired by a severely Biblical outlook. The clear-cut practical character of the Jewish ethos, too

¹ There are, of course, other important considerations to be kept in mind. I am fully aware of the differences between the scientific and religious pictures of the world.

has been an important factor in the development and organization of the West, and through the West, of other parts of the world.¹

The Jewish factor, then, can rightly be regarded as an instance of world-historical significance of the diffusion of cultural and religious ideas the influence of which has not yet been exhausted. The fact that Hebrew morality is rooted in theology, that human behaviour is the carrying out in history of the divine imperative, shows how far the modern world is removed from the Hebrew conception of God, man, and society; yet it is through the rejection of the theological foundation of morality, the typical principle of the Hebrew outlook on life, that the spiritual situation has arisen which has been so disastrous to the modern historical period. The Hebrew contribution to civilization is to be found in its insistence on divine judgment, on history as the sphere in which God speaks and acts, and in the awareness of God's demand for human obedience. Civilization stands or falls by its acceptance or rejection of these fundamental things. Whether, therefore, its substance is accepted or rejected, the basic values and principles of the Hebraic view of life are of the first importance in creating the ethical and religious conditions without which the highest morality cannot be achieved.

CHAPTER III

CIVILIZATION: THE DISSEMINATION OF VALUES

I

WE have glanced briefly at three ways in which civilizations and cultures have been extended beyond the area in which they had their origin. The first related to the spread of the externals of civilization which have influenced the inner life of civilized and uncivilized man; the second exemplified the spread of civilization and culture by the migration of peoples and the persuasive and compulsive power of a missionary religion; and the third illustrated the spread of a culture in an unusual form, but without many of the external institutions and principles of social cohesion associated with a civilization. We have ascended, so to speak, from the diffusion of *things* to that of *ideas* or *principles*, though this order does not represent the chronological succession of these two types of diffusion. There remain two further examples of the spread of ideas: "adventures of Ideas," in Whitehead's phrase.

It was not until the emergence of Greek civilization that there arose the things which have become spiritually determinative forces in the moulding of the thought and culture of the modern world. The Hellenic contribution was the greatest ever made to the development of the human spirit in all its

¹ It is significant that one of the most important contributions to modern industry was made by Emil and Walther Rathenau. The latter, especially, was in many ways a typical Jew, not in his religion, but in the divided character of his outlook. He owed an incalculable debt to his Jewish dynamism, yet at the same time was fundamentally divided and rootless. He is perhaps the best example in modern times of Jewish brilliance, "drive," and restlessness. See Count Harry Kessler's biography of him (*Walther Rathenau*, Howe, 1929).

aspects, the scientific and philosophical spirit of the Greeks supplying the foundation of the values embodied in the higher reaches of Western civilization, transmitted directly through the expansion of the Greek language into the common tongue of the Mediterranean world, the influence of Greek philosophy on Christian thought through the stimulus given by Platonism and neo-Platonism, and the impetus given to the first modern European movement, the Renaissance, through the recovery of Greek writings. During the last three hundred years, when Greek art and literature and philosophy became the common property of all civilized societies, the instrument of diffusion was not the movement of population but the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity which was made possible on a large scale by a purely mechanical factor, the invention of printing. Greek political thought, the study of Greek history, the Platonic philosophy, Greek emphasis on the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, are elements in the civilization of the West from which the modern civilized Westerner cannot free himself and remain civilized. Other important factors have entered into the formation of modern civilization, as has already been indicated; but of all ancient cultures it is the achievements and inspiration of the Greeks which are for the modern Western man a reminder of the highest values which have emerged in human society. Problems which are regarded to-day as of basic importance for human life, such as the nature of the state, of the good life, immortality of the soul, the nature of man's destiny, the nature of the community, the encouragement of harmonious existence, questions about the tragic sense of life, and other matters had all been dealt with by the Greeks in a manner more lasting in influence and more universal in relevance than by any other European or Asiatic people; and the transmission of Greek thought on these matters, though facilitated by the discovery of printing, received its real impetus from the nature of the Greek factor and the freshness of its inspiration as welcomed by the awakening European mind. It is not by accident that the Greek legacy has for centuries been the true basis of a liberal education, and that it is not the work of engineers and organizers, such as the Romans, the creators of institutions, which has had the deepest influence on the mind, but the principles of thought and the style of living evolved by Hellenic civilization. These have made their way through the world through self-commendation, through appealing to the human desire for spiritual fulfilment and enrichment through the things of the mind. The conflict proceeding in the contemporary world is ultimately one between those two aspects of civilization: the external, that which is imposed, and the inner, the free course of the things of the spirit.

The spread of the sense of values is one of the most recent manifestations of cultural contacts, and in this process the predominant agencies have been the extension of humanistic ideals and of the Christian religion. These, together with the dynamic influence of the Western nations through the development of machinery, which has in it the power to destroy it, have given to modern civilization its peculiar character; though at present there is in many areas of the world a retreat from, or even a revolt against, the spiritual values which are the legacy of Greece and Israel and which are alone capable of giving to society a permanent principle of coherence; for force is a dysgenic agency, not a means of welding the world into a peaceful unity.

When we consider the relation of Christianity to culture or civilization the matter is not so simple; for Christianity is not a religion identified with certain cultural forms, such as Judaism and Islam, nor is it, like Hinduism, an integral part of the culture which it has helped to create in a particular racial or geographical environment. Islam, like Christianity, is a way of life embracing a large number of races and nationalities, but with the advance of Western ideas it is ceasing to exercise the integrating influence associated with the idea of civilization, as for example in modern Turkey, where the Mohammedan church has been disestablished and Koranic law abolished. Whereas the culture of medieval Spain, like that of seventeenth-century India and of Japan (whose civilization was derivative or affiliated) until she became Westernized, was carried in one form or another from the country of origin, Christianity has to be somewhat differently considered; for there was no spread of Palestinian or Syrian culture corresponding to the spreading of the new religion by its missionaries. Christianity did not carry with it any particular kind of civilization, as did Buddhism and Mohammedanism when considered as missionary religions, for when the early Christians did not withdraw from society, they shared the culture of the land which they happened to inhabit. They possessed no set civilization, no uniform culture, no system of religious law, and no special form of art, no institutions apart from the local church. Even when it became possible to speak of Christian civilization, it possessed no uniformity, as is illustrated by the profound difference between the forms and institutions of the Orthodox and Roman Churches and Protestant, between Gothic-Nordic and southern Christianity. It is true that the influence of these various types of Christianity upon the style of life of the society adhering to them was considerable; but a distinction must be drawn between the influence thought to be exercised by the church and the form given to the church by the peculiar mentality and racial character of the people embraced by it. The typical form of ecclesiastical architecture found in Spain is baroque and plateresque, and even where magnificent specimens of Gothic architecture have been introduced from other parts of Europe, as for example in Burgos Cathedral, the Gothic style has been considerably modified by the Spanish love of the ornate, which has resulted, in the case of Burgos, in a curious compromise between the Spanish and the Northern types of architecture. Spanish baroque in its most extravagant style is found in Mexico and the South American Republics; but here again its character has been influenced by the nature of the landscape and of the people. The austerity of "gothic" catholicism suggests almost a difference in kind as compared with Spanish catholicism; there is as much difference between the "spirit" of such buildings as the cathedrals of Santiago de Compostella, Cuzco, and Guadalajara (Mexico) on the one hand, and the pure Gothic of the cathedrals of Notre Dame, St. Stephen (Vienna), Cologne, Chartres on the other, as between a Mohammedan mosque and a Hindu temple. Again: the austerity of ecclesiastical styles under the influence of the Calvinistic-Puritan tradition is profoundly different from English Gothic, and the Byzantine tradition is even more different, as is the whole of Eastern Orthodox ceremonial. Dr. Toynbee allocates to Orthodox society the status of a civilization all by itself.

This extreme diversity within Christendom makes it difficult to speak of Christian civilization, which is usually identified with the civilization of the West, the two things however, being very diverse, for Western civilization is the result of several factors, some of which have already been enumerated. Certain ideas of law and politics are diffused throughout the West (the term West is intended to include North America and South America where the influences are predominantly European and not "Indian"), but they are of Greek, Roman, and Germanic origin; furthermore, the laws of Christian countries, as well as their institutions, frequently run, or have run, counter to the Christian spirit, examples of which are the Inquisition and British penal law in the early nineteenth century. One can say quite definitely that there is now no such thing as a Christian civilization; there is only Western civilization in which are incorporated certain Christian institutions and values. That there is reason for saying that the West would not have arisen in its present form without the Christian Church does not necessarily imply that it is therefore Christian in character. It is not. During the Middle Ages, however, it was possible to speak of a Christian Europe and of a religiously inspired Western civilization. Universality was given to Western-Roman culture by the coincidence of the spread of the Church and the survival of Latin as the academic ecclesiastical language. A student could study at Oxford, Bologna, Paris or Salamanca without encountering any difficulties beyond those caused by variations in the pronunciation of Latin; yet it was not Christianity alone which moulded the intellectual activities of the Middle Ages but Christianity plus the heritage of the old Roman Empire combined in the form of theocratic imperialism and the notion of chivalry which was the Germanic contribution to the evolution of the medieval world. Yet all the things which are usually included in the word culture were at that time under the control of the Church: art, education, literature, philosophy. The Papal Bull *Unam Sanctam* declared that all things were under the jurisdiction of the Church, implying that nothing was secular in its own right, and the long conflict between the Empire and the Papacy had as its main issue the right of the Church to dominate the civil power. Universality there was: universality, in the West, of language and liturgy, of theological orthodoxy, of the institution; and in so far as the Roman Church was the only institution claiming to be the organ of the Christian religion, the medieval period can to a certain extent be described as one in which a Christian civilization prevailed; but only if the Church is equated with Christianity.

The Reformation was a denial of the validity of such an equation, and the force of its impact was such as to cause one more subdivision of "Christendom," for it was now not only Orthodox and Catholic: it was Protestant; but until the Protestant Reformation was established the culture of the late Middle Ages remained under the domination of the Church. The juncture of art and religion is richly illustrated in the work of the great painters of the Renaissance and the Pre-Renaissance. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries there was little secular painting outside portrait painting: the themes were practically always those which Christian piety of that time demanded and which the Church continued to subsidize. The great painters concentrated on the religious themes dear to the medieval Christian soul. The rising

humanists, on the other hand, whose work was not conditioned by theological or ecclesiastical considerations, brought their attention to bear upon the problem of man. Culture came to be valued for its own sake, and art ceased to be exclusively in the service of the church, though the great Catholic painters still expressed in their work the profound non-humanist notion of God embracing humanity, a notion of which Michelangelo's paintings describing Creation, Fall, and Redemption, in the Sistine Chapel, are a magnificent illustration.

The new turn, however, given to European culture by the rise of humanism, best described, perhaps, by Berdyaev's word "disincarnation," led away from the ancient conception of the interaction of human and divine forces. A society which could be described as Christian because it took for granted the basic principles of the Christian faith and regarded itself as coterminous with the Church now began to pass from the religious phase to the secular. States remained nominally Christian states; but their behaviour was not conditioned by Christian principles; perhaps it never has been; but throughout the Middle Ages, before the rise of the modern nationalist state, an endeavour was made to impose the *Pax Dei* upon Western Christendom, and to bring all human institutions under the jurisdiction of the Church.

The modern world has witnessed the expansion of Christianity beyond the realms covered by European Christendom. This has been the work of missionary enterprise, both Catholic and Protestant. But the spread of Christianity has coincided with the extension of the area over which the force exerting most influence has been the form of civilization which we have described as technical, and which, though originating in Christendom and made possible by the liberation of the human spirit from fear of nature, has no specifically Christian content. It is first and foremost the product of the modern world, whereas Catholic and Orthodox society are the product of antiquity. In so far as the modern world is in turn the creation of Western technology it may be said to be discontinuous with the so-called ages of faith, the ages of post-antiquity and of Medieval Catholicism, in spite of the continuity provided by the survival of ancient forms of religious institutionalism such as the churches of Christendom. Yet in many lands it is as a result of the widening of the areas of Christian influence that science has been able to perform creative not destructive work. Modern surgery, the noblest manifestation of the neotechnic spirit, has been made available in China and India and other non-Western countries by the concern of the Church for the mitigation of suffering. In this way neotechnics can be made to subserve a moral end, and in so far as this happens, and if it could happen on a larger scale, modern culture might be thought of as returning to the spiritual environment from which it has been divorced but in which it indirectly had its origin. Neotechnics, in the stricter sense of the word, is concerned with industry, comprising the application of modern science to large and small-scale industrial operations, characterized by the harnessing of electrical rather than steam energy; but it also includes the production of delicate apparatus for all kinds of purposes; it is actually a term with a time-significance rather than one suggesting a divergence from earlier scientific achievement. The hope of the Christian, like that of any humanist, is that all that the modern world has to offer should be used for the purpose of preserving life and of developing personality.

Christianity in action, especially in the Far East, has made this a main principle of its operations, and has in this way gone some distance towards giving an ethical aim to modern scientific activity. In the same way missionary centres have promoted education, encouraged native arts and crafts, and have set up institutions for the modern study of agriculture. This suggests that by making use of the products of Western civilization which have actually no ethical content or purpose some indication may emerge of the principles on which a Christian civilization may be built. Christianity by itself is a religious faith, not an integrated culture; Western civilization, without religious content, is the civilization of technics and politics. Neither is complete without the other if the process of reorganizing life is to be given a real and lasting impulse. For civilization, like culture, is a problem of ethics, and the solution of the problem of civilization is an ethical one.

2

Civilization, according to Spengler, is the "hardening" state of a culture; it is culture which has become sophisticated and has reached the condition of being no longer creative. It is, in a word, the period of institutions, not of spontaneity. Such a view of civilization reduces history to a series of cultural systems which are born and pass through adolescence to maturity and senility. The West, he holds, is now in the "hardened" state, and it is the destiny of Germany to occupy the highest pinnacle of the civilized West. That is the destiny of Faustian man: to find himself a member of a megalopolitan civilization which will be consummated in a Germanic super-empire. The last stage, the Winter, of civilization, is expressed in Caesarism (*cf.* Toynbee's "universal state"), particularly the Caesarism of money.

Spengler's forecast and analysis of the course of history are ingenious, plausible, and fascinating; but whatever truth they contain should be regarded as a warning rather than as an analysis. The main weakness in Spengler's philosophy is its cyclic determinism, and for this reason it has been vigorously combated. Another weakness, and one which afflicts most discussions of the nature of civilization, is its failure to answer the question: What is a civilized man? On the few occasions on which Spengler deals with individuals he seems to show that he regards them purely as the products of destiny, microcosms of the cosmos. "Destiny has made the man so or so." Preferably a man of action rather than of thought, for the latter belongs to the "late" ages of a culture, and represents its bankruptcy and the failure of its will to live. In the last resort it is only the man of action, the man of destiny, who lives in the *actual* world, "the world of political, military and economic decision, in which concepts and systems do not figure or count."¹ With his customary contempt for the man of thought, he dismisses the man of intellect, the philosopher, the framer of constitutions. The only *welthistorische* figure is the man of action. Morality, ethics, religion, appear to be, for Spengler, the evanescent products of a culture which is bound, sooner or later, to pass into the limbo of the historical past.

¹ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 17.

Yet civilization, it would seem, must consist of civilized individuals, and of as many of them as possible. Civilization must surely be something more than "hardened," institutionalized culture.

Mr. Clive Bell has given us an interesting portrait of the type of man whom he considers to be civilized. The civilized person

"is not the good man nor the natural; he is not the artist, the hero, the saint, nor the philosopher; but he appreciates art, respects the truth, and knows how to behave himself. To enjoy life to the full is his end, and to enjoy it as a whole and in its subtlest and most recondite details; and to this end his chief means are his powers of thinking and feeling, intensely cultivated. He is a man of taste in all things. His intellectual curiosity is boundless, fearless, and disinterested. He is tolerant, liberal, and unshockable; and if not always affable and urbane, at least never truculent, suspicious, or overbearing. He chooses his pleasures deliberately, and his choice is limited neither by prejudice nor fear. Because he can distinguish between ends and means he values things for their emotional significance rather than their practical utility. All cant about 'rights,' 'duties,' and 'sanctities' blows past him like grit and chaff, annoying without injuring. His sense of values, intelligently handled, is a needle to prick the frothy bubbles of moral indignation."¹

In Mr. Bell's opinion to be civilized means that one has to be an intellectual snob, a man of taste, a thorough individualist, and a person incapable of moral reactions or attitudes: in other words, an eighteenth century intellectual *gourmet*. It is a disagreeable picture, more significant as an indication of a particular outlook than of what a "civilized" man should be. Mr. Bell's "disseminators" of civilization ("civility" he calls it, which is not the same thing) might attain to a certain elegance in their manner of living, but a society of such people would be intolerable. They are, incidentally, the type which Spengler despises. A cultural aristocracy is necessary to any community if it is to be saved from tawdriness and barbarism; but it need not be necessary to erect snobbery into a virtue and detachment into an ideal to develop a civilized manner of living. Tolerance and liberty are very precious attitudes of mind; but without the moral concern which Mr. Bell deplores they easily degenerate into indifference and amorality. If this is a picture of a civilized (and not merely cultured) man, a good deal is left to be desired; for it does not represent the kind of life which can be commended to many. One feels, somehow, that a civilized person is concerned about "rights," "duties," and "sanctities"; for these are values which are revealed in a truly civilized life, and without which there cannot be a form of life recognizable as civilization: without them society cannot cohere, and can therefore not be civilized; rights based upon and reflected in law, duties based upon a sense of obligation, and sanctities arising out of a reverent attitude towards the world. Mr. Bell, apparently, considers these things worthless, and talk about them as mere cant, and moral indignation simply a "frothy bubble." He anticipates that his picture of a civilized man will be considered, as he puts it, "slightly unsympathetic," though "thoroughly disagreeable" might be an apter phrase. It is curious that his conception of civilized man should include practically everything except morality and religion, and unshockability is not necessarily a sign of civilization or of culture. The civilized man, for Mr. Bell, is simply the aesthete.

¹ Clive Bell, *Civilization*, Pelican edn., pp. 163-4. Mr. Klaus Mann, the son of Thomas Mann, has an interesting idea of what constitutes the civilized person. Writing of Paris, he says: "All things concerning sex are handled *with that casualness which is the proof of real civilization.*" (*The Turning Point*, Gollancz, 1944, p. 94.) (Italics mine.)

The aesthetic approach to life is an element in the civilized outlook; but whether one is or is not an aesthete is largely a matter of temperament. Man does not live by being detached from rights and duties and sanctities, by appreciating Mozart, Picasso, or James Joyce, by indulging the delights of the mind and of the feelings, even though these bring pleasure. A love of the exquisite is commendable, but there are, despite Mr. Bell, other significant things in life, and these, too, belong to the concept of civilization. In so far as civilization can be understood in terms of ideas and not merely of institutions, it is necessary to find a place for such ideas in the life of mankind if an adequate picture of civilized man is to be produced. For Professor Whitehead civilization means something quite different from what it does for Mr. Bell. His profound book *Adventures of Ideas* is a study in the working out of certain ideas promoting the "slow drift of mankind towards civilization": ideas such as truth, beauty, adventure, peace; sociological, cosmological, and philosophical ideas having their origin in the Hebrew and Hellenic outlook on the world. Mr. Bell sees significance only in the Hellenic, or in a modernized, if rococoified version, of the Hellenic ideal; but civilization has a place for Calvin as well as Castello, though the latter is a more likeable, though less effective, figure; for Luther as well as Erasmus; for Shakespeare as well as Bacon; for Milton as well as Voltaire; for the author of the *Book of Job* as well as for the author of *Ecclesiastes*. It is this refusal to see the necessity for the ethical element in culture which is one of the greatest sources of weakness in modern civilization; for a culture which includes a high morality is richer than pure aestheticism without morality.¹ Much of what we have called the failure of history has been due to the lack of passion, or enthusiasm, in the men whom Mr. Bell might call civilized: the Erasmuses, the humanists, the Castellios, who have been unable to harness the social and religious forces of their time; that was left to the more dynamic, though less cultured, personalities of history, the men of action, the men of destiny; and though they have given impulses to historical movement, they have lacked tolerance and their moral fervour has often outrun reason. It was not the elegant eighteenth century aesthetes who saved England from degradation but the dynamic Wesleys; and though their outlook was of necessity narrower than, say, Lord Chesterfield's, there is no doubt as to whose was the most civilizing influence.

Tolerance is an important virtue; but there are things which it is better not to tolerate. Barbarism is one of them; cruelty, falsehood, irresponsibility, exploitation, lack of reverence for the sanctities of life, are others; but Mr. Bell's civilized man appears to show no interest in them. He judges life aesthetically, not morally. For him the civilized man is concerned only with refinement of taste. He can exist under a tyranny as well as under a democracy, especially if he happens to be a partner in the tyranny.

¹ To mention another example. Judged by the standards of Mr. Clive Bell, Jeroboam and the "Kine of Bashan" would be "civilized"; Amos a barbarian. But which, in any intelligible use of the word, was really "civilized"? Clearly the man who believed in moral values.

3

Yet an enlightened democrat believes that his political ideas, and the life of reason and morality in which they are grounded, are inseparable from any adequate notion of "civilization." He knows, too, that the main issue about which the second world war was fought was whether a certain kind of "civilization" was to be spread throughout the world by military imposition, or whether his own ideas of human civilization are to be extended by infiltration and self-commendation. World-unity achieved by force was the aim both of Germany and Japan: the one assumed the self-appointed leadership of the West and the other of the East, and the claims of each were disputed by those who preferred to choose or develop their own political-economic institutions in their own way. For they, too, have a certain ideal of civilization which is not to be diffused by force but by the appeal to reason and to man's self-respect.

This recent method of spreading "civilization" (Germanism, East Asia Co-prosperity, or whatever it is called) is obsolete, for since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the period during which the technical contacts between nations have reduced their individual isolation, it has not been necessary to attach ideas to armies in order that they may be diffused. Wars for colonial possessions have had trade as their object, not the spread of certain ideas of government. The Press, communications, or the radio, in spite of censorships, have been proved to be quite adequate means of spreading ideas and political theories and the institutions to which they have given rise. Hence, if it is assumed that totalitarian ideas of government are desirable, their incorporation in political systems should be possible of achievement by normal methods of transmission and contact. Empires, of course, are not founded by persuasion. The Romans had to use force because they believed in an *imperium* and because there were no other means of extending their idea of order; the French revolutionary armies, aided, to some extent, however, by the existence of limited democratic ideas outside France, sought to impose the principles of the Revolution by force of arms, and not by erecting such a model democratic state as would induce others in other lands to endeavour to imitate it. In 1815, it seemed, the period in history in which political ideas were to be forced upon other peoples by the strong nation which believed in them seemed to have come to an end. The crusading spirit which had reached its peak in the Reformation and post-Reformation period appeared to have worked itself out. The emergence of democratic ideas in 1830 and 1848 was not due to the spread of those ideas by armies but by personal contact, conviction, and the press. Nineteenth century wars were concerned with expanding trade and with the consolidation of states, not with the imposition of political systems by alien armies.

The twentieth century, however, has returned to the practice of the Reformation and the French Revolution. People are having certain ideas of government thrust upon them whether they like them or not, or they are to be pressed into an alien form of political "collaboration," the alternative to which appears to be extermination. Thus Germany desired to impose her

political ideas upon the rest of Europe, Japan hers upon Asia and the Pacific, and ultimately, like Germany, upon the rest of the world. Each of these powers reverted to uncivilized methods in order to carry out its intentions; in a word, it reverted to a technique which has been obsolete for over a century. Resort to armed intervention in order to extend one's own political convictions is a virtual admission that those convictions are unacceptable to others. This method of dissemination is unquestionably a form of throw-back to a more primitive technique.

Democratic ideas, on the other hand, have not been forced upon nations at the point of the sword for the reason that they cannot be compelled to be democrats, though they may be compelled to submit to the dictation of a tyranny. Self-government was practised from the beginning by the seventeenth century British immigrants into America, and when towards the end of the eighteenth century they revolted against dictation from London they re-defined what they understood by democracy in the Declaration of Independence. British colonists took with them to various parts of the world the ideas of self-government in which they had been brought up, and even where similar ideas, as when practised by the Boers, were challenged, self-government was restored a few years later. In Ireland and India the tendency has been the reverse of this practice: the British system of self-government was withheld rather than imposed; in the case of India the reason, it is alleged, being that full self-government cannot be granted until the Indians are ready for it. Yet when India does become self-governing it will not be through her being compelled to be a democracy, as she might be compelled by Germany or Japan to institute an unpalatable form of authoritarian government. Under the British Colonial system, too, there has been no universal attempt to force British democratic methods on people who are not ready for them. The policy of Lord Lugard in West Africa and of Sir Hubert Murray in Papua was to encourage better government through local institutions.

There is, therefore, a fundamental difference between the mode of the transmission of democratic ideas and the forced acceptance of totalitarian systems. For Wordsworth, living across the Channel, it may have been bliss to be alive in the dawn of the French Revolution, but its liberating principles would not have been very welcome had they been imposed upon him by French armies. For those armies, spreading the triple gospel of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, were little more than the agents employed by Napoleon for maintaining his own undesired nominees on foreign thrones. With certain exceptions, the principles which they advocated by force were in practice exchanged for tyrannies. It is easier to impose a tyranny than self-government.

Self-government, which is the foundation of democracy, is won, not imposed; and though people may be compelled to be slaves, they cannot be compelled to be free men; for the principles of liberal-democracy would be rendered ineffective if they were thrust upon others rather than commended to them. In any case efficient self-government under compulsion is not only a contradiction in terms: it is a psychological impossibility. For democracy is based not upon force but upon persuasion, and is therefore more civilized than systems

founded on force. It is something into which people grow, though like other things which grow it is not exempt from decay. Wherever it has operated it has produced broadly similar patterns of life, and has been associated with Protestant rather than Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christianity, its theological centre being Geneva, and its political centre London.

Democracy is high public morality and private wisdom applied to politics; where these are lacking they cannot be created by force. Because peoples have known them, and have experienced, on the balance, their efficient operation, they will not surrender without resistance the democratic rights which they have won, though if high public morality and private wisdom applied to politics declines, the result is the debacle of the democratic way of life. Germany easily became a dictator-state because she was not at heart a democracy, in spite of her possession of an apparently strong democratic party. In France democracy collapsed because of the political apathy of the masses and the public amorality of her politicians. In Spain, the confusion of democracy with ochlocracy, of representative government with direct action, provoked such a reaction that Spanish democracy was for the time destroyed.¹ In Japan abuse of democracy and ensuing political corruption led to an increase in Communism, which again provoked a militarist-fascist reaction. But in none of these countries can democracy be established or re-established by force from outside. It will have to grow from the seeds which are already there, or be encouraged. Concerned as it is with moral-political values, it will have to make its way by peaceful penetration.

As mankind advances reason should play a more prominent part in politics than compulsion, and persuasion should be more conspicuous than forcible "conversion"; for government by popular consent, even though not always as efficient as it might be, is in the long run less likely to cause violent jerks in historical development than government by the few who have concentrated all power, all propaganda, all executive and judicial authority, in their own hands. For politics, essentially the art of *good* or *right* government, is not, as the totalitarians would have it, an instrument of power, but a function of ethics. Political institutions should be concerned with the *right* government of states, with just administration, not with the exercise of unrestricted authority. "Right," however, does not mean "infallible," for there is no such thing as infallible government; but it does mean such government as is designed to further the welfare of the many, not of the few, and not at the expense of any other locality or state. Municipal politics may be corrupt, but on the whole they are not, and it is countries which have a long tradition of local government which have made the best democracies. The aim of local government is welfare, not power. So it should be with national politics, for the political behaviour of a state is the reflection of the behaviour of its citizens. Good popular government is the expression of good popular morality. There are, however, factors in the diffusion of democratic ideas which are outside the concern of ethics. As Viscount Samuel indicated in a discussion of the Atlantic Charter, self-government is difficult unless the state adopting it is

¹ So Ortega y Gasset: "The great misfortune of Spanish history has been the lack of distinguished minorities and the undisturbed rule of the masses." *España Invertebrada*, Works, I, p. 527. See also *The Spanish Tragedy*, by Allison Peers (1936).

homogenous. If there is in that state a large alien minority, or if, as in India, there is a large, compact religious minority, also claiming self-government within the state, a difficult political as well as administrative problem is raised.¹ Along authoritarian lines, involving the forcing of the minority into the framework of a unitary state or the elimination of the minority by persecution or depriving it of its own especial rights, a solution can, of course, be found; but it is the way of Nazi Germany, not of an enlightened state. The problem of minorities is an exceedingly complicated and difficult one; but from the standpoint of democracy this can be said about it. Although the concession of the democratic principle of self-government raises the problem, the answer to it, as long as there are large minorities in self-governing states, is provided by the nature of democracy itself. It is through the granting of rights and the liberal toleration of the minority that the unity of the state can be preserved where racial or religious homogeneity is lacking. This has been the policy of Soviet Russia towards the many races within the U.S.S.R. and of the British Administration towards the French Canadians. There should be no real obstacle, if a state of true liberal democracy were reached, in the way of applying the same principle to Central Europe.

The problem is not only political; it is moral in so far as there is involved a right attitude of mind and a conception of universally valid rights.

It is this universality, in its human-nature-basis, of the democratic scheme of values which constitutes the essentially civilized character of democracy. Through its agency have been diffused the moral factors which enter into politics: the liberty of the individual, the responsibility of the government to its electors, the maintenance of impartial justice and the theoretical equality of the members of a state. Where these have been denied, democracy has not made headway; and where it has been weak or suppressed, they have been discouraged. Where it has been established, they have grown; and where they are stunted, under a democratic system, there is something wrong with the form of democracy practised.

Democracy can become a more adequate vehicle for the diffusion of moral-political values when it is purified, when it is wholly concerned with right and good government. This can be achieved in two ways: secular and religious. The first is through education for citizenship, the second through the realization of the religious obligation of concern for the neighbour's welfare, which was one of the sources of democratic citizenship in former times. Yet neither education in true democracy nor the religious spirit which should be its foundation can be imposed upon one nation after another by force. Both must win their way, as all civilized culture must, through the contact of mind with mind, through the peaceful diffusion of ideas, through the seed taking root in the minds of people. This may be a slow method, but it is the more civilized.

¹ *In the Contemporary Review*, Jan., 1942.

CHAPTER IV

THE SICKNESS OF DEMOCRACY

I

THE Second World War was rightly interpreted as a conflict between civilization and barbarism. It was also an attack by an absolutist state-system on what are broadly called democracies, though this statement must be made with caution, for all the states in the anti-axis coalition were not democracies, nor were all the states which were attacked by Germany, and one of her allies, Finland, was a democracy. Neither Russia, Greece, China, nor Yugoslavia is a democracy as that term is understood in the West, and France, a democracy was before the war rapidly falling into political chaos. With that considerable qualification, however, it may be said that the struggle was between tyranny and self-determination, between the will to subdue and the will to be free; between organized, ruthless nihilism and a civilized mode of life which aims at conserving, not destroying, traditional values.

Is democracy able to conserve these values which are at the root of civilized life? Can democracy, in this present critical stage of history, further the diffusion not only of technical achievement but also of the values which are the fruit of the human spirit? Can democracy replace what the totalitarian apologists call "historical dynamism" by intervening at this decisive stage in history and becoming equally "dynamic"? At present it is the only buttress of the values which have been won, at one time or other, at a great cost; can it do more than buttress them, namely, conserve, guarantee, and develop them? This is a question vitally relevant to the present world situation, for unless it can they are doomed to obscurity for a long time to come. Progress depends upon the conservation of values.

2

Let us first inquire into the kind of values which democracy is concerned to perpetuate.

It is not primarily concerned with aesthetic or cultural values, for there is little evidence that these have a greater tendency to flourish under democracies than under oligarchic or absolute governments. The opposite, in fact, would appear to be nearer the truth, for the closer democracy approaches to ochlocracy the more likely is it that cultural values will be in jeopardy. Owing to what may be a complicated series of causes the aesthetic values have received their most glorious expression in art and letters chiefly during the pre-democratic periods. The florescence of drama in Elizabethan England and in the France of Louis XIV; the Golden Age of the Spanish theatre and painting in the seventeenth century; the amazing performance of the painters and

sculptors in medieval and renaissance Italy; the output of great music and literature at the courts of Köthen, Weimar, and Vienna during the period of German disunity; the intensive activity of the Japanese coloured woodcut artists before 1860; the philosophical achievements of Leibnitz, Kant, Voltaire, and Hegel under authoritarian governments; the widespread poetic culture dependent upon aristocratic patronage in medieval Wales; the work of Pushkin, Chekhov, Dostoevski and others in Romanov Russia: these are some examples of the manner in which the arts have flourished, during the modern period of historical development, under non-democratic conditions, and they show that the creation, appreciation, and encouragement of cultural values does not depend upon popular interest; in fact they have been more enthusiastically encouraged under absolute monarchies and petty princelings than in democratic states. Nineteenth century art in Britain and artistic achievement in the United States and the British Dominions present an arid spectacle to the student of culture, though it would be false to suggest that democracy alone has been responsible for such lack of cultural urge. Yet the arrival of the great totalitarian states has turned art into the handmaid of politics: it is an instrument of propaganda, and as such it is likely to become sterile. The development of industrial democracy, however, does indeed seem to have coincided with a decline in artistic creativeness; the pleasures of the "people" are not those which require effort to appreciate, but collectively enjoyed pastimes such as the cinema, the racecourse, and the football or baseball field. Democracy would seem to discourage and corrupt taste rather than encourage it.

Whatever the reasons for the florescence, at certain periods, of aesthetic values, they are certainly not political. The values, if any, which democracy is capable of conserving, are other than purely cultural.

We are on safer ground when we consider the other kind of values which constitute civilization: moral values, for awareness of them is deeper and more universal. It is democracies, or men and groups of men whose outlook and aims are democratic, who have been concerned about moral-political values, such as the "rights of man," man's right to civil, political, and religious liberty, impartial justice, and the separation of the judicature from the executive as a guarantee of it; equality of opportunity, freedom of thought and speech, personal freedom; for these, as constituent elements of a political outlook, have their roots in a conception of human nature which is fundamentally moral and spiritual. The democrat is less concerned with values which belong to the intellect and imagination than with those which are ethical, pragmatic, involving behaviour. Not all can appreciate philosophy or poetry or music; but most people understand what is meant by some form of freedom. Most people feel that certain "rights" are due to them, even though there may be some confusion as to what those rights should be. They are grounded, however, in the notion that personality is something existing in its own right, to be revered, and to be protected from tyranny; even Communism, the most materialistic of philosophies, sets out to satisfy the needs of the "people" by appealing to the principle of social justice. Contemporary nihilistic society, like medieval or any other form of tyranny, does not treat man as an end in himself; he is there to be exploited by the ruling oligarchy. He is accorded certain rights as a member of a race or class, perhaps, but not

primarily because he is a man. Other peoples, however, are to be degraded and deprived of the "rights" which are only permitted to the ruling race. Democracy, on the other hand, especially in the eighteenth century, in France, America, and Great Britain, conceived of man as a creature entitled to certain rights (or claims): the right to be free, the right to shape his own destiny in alignment with certain universal moral laws, the right (on the whole) to worship as he wished. Law is regarded as a function of right, not of power; all men have rights, for moral values have a universal basis in the law of nature. The universality of these rights was for the early democrats axiomatic, and had a kind of transcendental supernatural basis which was less obviously empirical than theoretic. These men did not begin by observing man as he actually was, as he behaved in society, but with certain philosophical or religious presuppositions which were regarded as axiomatic. Rousseau, observing that everywhere man, in his view, was in chains, should have taken slavery as the empirical datum for an anthropology; but he began with an *a priori* assumption that man was born free, an assumption which is not verifiable in experience. Nor, again, do the theorists who have framed democratic constitutions base their ideas of what ought to be on what actually is; hence the value of democracy as a scheme of life consists not of what in practice is but what is deemed ideally to be fitting. Apologists for absolutism are less convincing than those for democracy not because they savour more of self-interest but because the basis of their theory is much more restricted. If a thing is right, it should be right not only for the governing few, but for the governed many. Yet what is considered by the democrat to be right is usually that which *ought* to be right; it is taken as a basic assumption or aimed at as an end which is both practically and theoretically desirable. Democracy, ideally, is concerned not only with sovereignty but also with the declaration of the right of the people to such fundamental moral values as liberty and justice. Absolutist government may grant these as privileges, but does not regard them as rights.

That, briefly, is the position of democracy as the custodian of moral values. It is, however, pertinent to ask whether, in practice, democracy is capable of conserving them. An ideal picture of what democracy is supposed to do is not necessarily the same as one's experience of it in actual practice.

It is important that this question should be faced, for democracy in 1939 was in many respects in a process of decay where it was not already dead. In 1921 Lord Bryce could write of "the universal acceptance of democracy as the normal and natural form of government." Yet less than twenty years later this was no longer true, for in several lands it was in a state of chronic ill-health; in others it showed symptoms of disintegration, and in many it had been violently assaulted and overcome without offering much resistance because it had little strength. In few lands was it secure, and where it exhibited no signs of immediate break-up it was timid and vacillating, as though afraid to assert itself against a strong resurgent nationalist totalitarianism. Indeed, it looked as though what the Fascists said about it was true; it had no "dynamism," and the criticism levelled at it that it was a pluto-democracy had much truth in it. It may therefore be instructive to glance at some of the democracies as they were during the years 1930-39, and see what kind of a picture they provide.

3

In several countries, during that decade, the democratic mood and government presented a sorry spectacle, vices being more in evidence than virtues, and weaknesses more conspicuous than strength. In Britain, the chief contribution of democracy to international welfare was a long and dangerous policy of appeasement, which continued up to the outbreak of the war and even afterwards. Its crowning achievement was, of course, the capitulation at Munich. Fortunately, through a change in leadership, this period was overcome, but not until the German menace to freedom was on our own doorstep. The causes were two-fold: on the one hand there was a government led by a Prime Minister who was indiscreet enough to say that Britain's frontier was on the Rhine but was unwilling to take a single step to safeguard that frontier if it was likely to point even remotely to war and equally unwilling to support a policy of collective security to safeguard peace, followed by another Prime Minister who insisted upon following his own policy without in the least appearing to understand the mentality of the men who confronted him, and determined to follow this policy rather than that of advisers such as Sir Robert Vansittart who understood the situation far better. On the other hand, there was a public whose interest in politics was very limited and which had little control over the policy of the government. It could not be roused to demand adequate collective action against aggression, and was optimistically ignorant of the real trend of German expansionism, satisfied, where it showed any concern at all, with making some show of futile moral indignation. Further, the pacifist section of British opinion was, if not large, noisy and influential; and in addition to this (which included some of the best apologists for Hitler) there was a small, but again influential, group of aristocrats, financiers, and industrialists who, if not avowedly pro-German, were at least not unsympathetic towards the Nazis, the most recent examples of whose policy were the Dusseldorf deal (signed in March 1939 after the invasion of Czechoslovakia), the handing over to Germany of Austrian gold in London, the Czech gold scandal, and the last-minute granting of new credits to Germany.¹ Even during the late war one of those appeasers, the Duke of Bedford, wrote an article in which he expressed the opinion that if Hitler had been trusted and treated nicely and in a friendly manner he would have reacted prettily to this display of warm-heartedness.

Whatever the precise causes, British democracy as represented by its government showed little sensible initiative in foreign policy, and when Mr. Chamberlain began belatedly to scatter guarantees all over Europe, solicited or unsolicited, the situation had deteriorated so far that retrieval was impossible. If "national will" be a test of effectiveness, Nazi Germany was far more effective than democratic Britain.

Among the general population during those years there was little conviction about anything; a few politically minded people found their way into the left-wing section of political thought. While the Liberal party became even more diminutive, the membership of the Trades Unions decreased, and such

¹ See Paul Einzig, *op. cit.*

organizations as the Labour League of Youth were very small in comparison with the total working-class population of the country. No more than half the electors went to the municipal polls, and in some by-elections the total votes cast averaged about one-third. Writing about the lack of interest in politics among those who might be best qualified to share political responsibility, Mr. G. M. Young confesses: "I cannot conceal from myself that among them there does exist, here, in England, to-day, something of the same indolence and disaffection as elsewhere has opened the way to calamity, and the overthrow of free institutions,"¹ and Dr. J. H. Oldham, basing his conclusion on a wide survey of the contemporary mood, writes: "There appears to be relatively little thought or concern for the future of society at all. The majority look forward to returning when the war is over, to the old familiar conditions of life. This apathy is doubtless due partly to the fact that the conditions of service (in the army) are inimical to serious thought. . . . The impression left on one's mind is inescapable. There is among the youth of the nation at present no force of belief or passionate conviction capable of bringing a new society to birth."² It is a doleful conclusion, but one for which there is nevertheless overwhelming evidence. There is a whole generation in existence to which politics makes no appeal. Even in the midst of a world-shattering crisis, there has been little general concern for a dynamic outlook in life which could be regarded as a counterblast to the "dynamism" of the totalitarian states.³ The democratic countries exhibit little keenness for anything beyond their own national survival. This is not the fault of democracy as such, however, for the claim of the people to exercise sovereign right arose from a desperate concern for politics and for the rights and liberties of the individual. It was this which inspired the Pilgrim Fathers, the Roundheads, the framers of the American Constitution, the sturdy independence of the Swiss and the Dutch. The main reason may be that democracy, as it has been known during the inter-war years, has had in it little which would appeal to the masses, having produced no political leaders of exceptional magnitude. Whatever the reasons may be for the collapse of interest in politics, there are disturbing features which cannot be ignored in the England of our time.

Turning to Spain, the picture presented by that country since its democratic revolution in 1931 had little to commend itself. Cursed by a long heritage of anarchism, violent anti-clericalism, a political instability due to a constant swing of the pendulum from Left to Right, a curious method of representation, and a situation aggravated by the rise of a compact, ruthless Communist party, Spain headed straight for trouble. Direct action, for long popular with the Spaniards, became an endemic disease; extremism of the Right and of the Left, with the usual accompaniments of assassination and incendiarism, provocation and counter-provocation, made orderly government difficult; and the enlightened liberals, men such as Ortega y Gasset, Castillejo, Unamuno, Marañón, and others, raised their voices in vain. It is no accident that the

¹ *The Government in Britain*, Britain in Pictures, Collins, 1941, p. 9.

² *The Christian News-Letter*, April 17, 1940.

³ cf. An article on *What the Soldier Thinks*, published in *The Spectator*, Dec. 1944 with the subsequent correspondence, and the *Picture Post*, Aug. 19, 1944, etc.

most incisive criticisms of the weaknesses of modern mass-democracy have come from the pens of Spaniards: Señores Ortega y Gasset and Madariaga. The period of Spanish political and social history contemporaneous with the short-lived second Republic, and culminating in the formation of the Frente Popular, was one of the saddest political spectacles imaginable: Liberals, Catholic Action, Libertarian Atheists, the Union of Proletarian Brothers (U.H.P.), various assortments of Communists, Anarchists, and Syndicalists, formed a bizarre and chaotic political scene, and Gil Robles, Andres Nin, and the financier Juan March were the natural products of a system which permitted the unchecked growth of parties and forces whose conflicts were doomed to throw the whole body politic into confusion. The revolt of the Right was inevitable, and was made so by the disintegration of Spanish democracy, to which it of course contributed; for the lack of restraint practised by the members and groups of the democratic parties, as well as the intransigence of the Right coalitions supported by the landlords and industrialists, made the conflict inescapable. One of the main factors in the Spanish tragedy was the apparent inability of the Spanish people to produce one first-rate statesman; the most notable figures were inflammatory orators, whereas none of the men who should have guided the Republic, such as Alcalá Zamora, Lerroux, and Azaña were capable of doing so, being either nonentities or place-hunters. A further misfortune was that the democracies allowed the Germans and Italians to fish in these troubled waters, instead of letting the Spaniards work out their own political salvation.

Nor was there much to inspire respect for democracy in the French political scene. Weary of war and desiring only to be left in peace, confused by party politics and a system which encouraged the self-seeking *politicien* rather than the honest statesman, the Frenchman adopted the attitude of cynical indifference. On reading descriptions of French politics from 1930 onwards one wonders how a form of government which, in the hands of ornaments such as Laval, Baudouin, Bonnet and others, became little more than a means to self-enrichment and advancement, contrived not only to be tolerated by the great mass of Frenchmen but even to survive at all. The Stavisky scandal and the Paris riots of 1934, the intrigues of the Cagouards and the Croix de Feu, the decision of the Blum government to adopt a forty-hour week at a time when Germany was rearming on a vast scale, the attitude of French industrialists towards rearmament, the widespread pacifism among the teaching profession, and the prevalence of defeatism among politicians: all these were a prelude to the collapse of June 1940, which was in effect that of an effete democracy. A French priest wrote during the spring of 1940 of the men in the French army: "They all appear to be sceptics—sceptics in regard to human matters, in regard to the war in particular, and in regard to politics in general. . . . The politics of recent years have literally worn them out, even spiritually; they no longer believe in anything."¹ This utter apathy, this *Je m'en foutisme*, was not a happy way of dealing with political corruption, and it was unfortunately an encouragement to the aggressive nation on the other side of the frontier. The strike of the French workmen which prevented the French pavilion at the Paris Exhibition from being ready in time for the

¹ *The Christian News-Letter*, April, 1940.

opening made France a laughing-stock in Germany and justly provided the most scathing cartoons in the German papers of the day, which published pictures of German workmen carrying enormous loads while the Frenchmen in cloth caps and roll-top pullovers lounged against the scaffolding with cigarettes drooping from their lips.

In case this picture of French democracy during the inter-war years may be considered one-sided, I will quote the comments of an experienced observer who himself was desperately concerned about the health of the French nation:

"More even than her dearth of men, France was paying for all the errors of a regime which had been betrayed by demagoguery—both of Right and Left—by the passions of the parties, and by the criminal hold of a destructive Communism on the state. . . .

"Socially, France had scarcely begun to rediscipline herself. Hard work had come to be regarded as discreditable. Laziness had been raised to a principle, it had almost been glorified. The Communist poison had been allowed to seep into the veins of the working class, hitherto revolutionary and quick to assert its rights, but fundamentally sound. It had invaded government offices, already undermined over a long period by the corruption of politicians. Slowness, unwillingness, when it was not actual dishonesty, had impaired the working of many of the wheels of the administrative machine, and those functionaries who were proud of the body to which they belonged had looked on with sorrow and discouragement at this slow degradation.

"Politically the existing regime had nothing of true Parliamentarism but the name and the outward show. . . . For the parties it was a question of winning more votes, always more votes, in order to gain the majority, the object was to lay hands on what they characteristically termed the controlling levers: in other words, the Ministries, at least the important ones, the high positions, the administrative posts, the means of taking and giving positions, many positions, ever more positions, positions for all and sundry."¹

In the light of this situation the frequent talk about France being the custodian of culture and civilization seems to fall rather flat. It has little relevance to the France of 1935-40. Honest men such as Georges Mandel were rarities in political life: the successors of Briand and Tardieu were men of little integrity and of no outstanding ability. Even Paul Reynaud, who was at first willing to continue the war, soon collapsed under the evil influence of Baudoin and of his mistress Hélène de Portes.

The state of France throws no light on our question as to the competence of the democratic countries to stand as vindicators of civilized values, at any rate in politics. It is possible, however, that France's catastrophic experience will act as a means of purifying her politics, and that on the recovery of her freedom she will be in a better position to appreciate the values for which democracy stands.

Democracy in Germany was discredited almost from the day of its inception. Conceived and born in defeat, handicapped by inflation, identified with humiliation and unemployment, jeopardized by putsches and finally destroyed, when no longer capable of virility, by intrigues in the autumn and winter of 1932, it came to a dishonoured and unlamented end. Not that democracy was ever respected by the great mass of the German people: it was not. Propaganda, and the self-pity in which the Germans as a nation have luxuriated since 1918, their national love of authority and respect for the strong man, did not provide a background against which democracy was likely to flourish for any length of time. A generation which had experienced financial ruin and vast unemployment, preyed upon by the extremes of Communism and Fascism, an easy victim of nationalistic opportunism, and faced with the

¹ Elie J. Bois, *Truth on the Tragedy of France*, p. 73-74, Hodder and Stoughton, 1940.

remains of a coalition of victorious democracies who were represented as using the League of Nations as an instrument to maintain their own ascendancy in Europe: such a generation could not be expected to take spontaneously to the Weimar Republic and to show enthusiasm for political liberty comparable with that of the English-speaking countries. It was not part of their tradition. Nor was the form of democracy applied in Germany the kind which was calculated to inspire confidence, for the system of representation adopted, and the number of political parties permitted (there were thirty of them in the election of July 1932), did not make for stable government by a lasting majority. Even in the days before the First World War the Reichstag, though elected by manhood suffrage, failed to exercise control over the executive. Bismarck and the Kaiser could do what they pleased: all the Reichstag had to do was to give its ratification.

The great German cities, especially Berlin, during the inter-war years did not present a pleasing spectacle. There was much disorder, which failed to meet with much opposition, and preoccupation with sexual perversion gave the life of the capital a sordid twist. Books such as Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's *Sittengeschichte der Inflation*¹ expressed and pandered to an unhealthy concern with the night-side of German post-war life, and wandering roughs made it dangerous to be abroad late in Hamburg, and even in less artisan cities such as Dresden.

Political life during this period was less corrupt than in France, but its democratic foundation was but a thin crust. The collapse of the German Trade Unions in the spring of 1933 was one of the most surprising moments in the history of the European labour movement, and the manner in which scholars with great reputations, such as the jurist Professor Carl Schmitt and the biologist Dr. Eugen Fischer, formerly rector of Berlin University, allowed themselves to become apologists for the Nazi regime is one of the many examples of the humiliation which German scholarship allowed itself to suffer after the end of the Republic. The Civil Service, too, remained at heart faithful to the non-democratic tradition; many men, who were honest enough to retain their old sympathies and to be loyal to them, refused to take office under the Republican government, and a large number of those who carried on the work of the state, particularly the heads of departments, paid only nominal loyalty to the Republic. Men who had been *Staatssekretäre* under the Republic, for example, found no difficulty in working under the Nazis. The unresisted overthrow of the Braun-Severing Government in Prussia, too, was an instance of the limited enthusiasm for the Republican regime. Nobody lifted a finger in its defence. The German working-class movement as well as the bourgeois parties failed to show a fraction of the manly fighting spirit displayed by the Spanish republicans, to their lasting disgrace.

Less need be said about American democracy, for it was far removed from the confused and unattractive European scene.² Like most other

¹ *History of Morals during the Inflation*. The first edition of this book (25,000 copies) was sold before publication. Hirschfeld was head of the Hirschfeld Institute for Sexual Research and concerned himself chiefly with problems of sexual pathology, about which he wrote prolifically.

² Though until Dec. 1941 the sense of public responsibility seems to have been as lacking as in Europe. See Vincent Sheean, *Between the Thunder and the Sun*, Ch. IV.

political systems it failed to live up to its own high principles, partly because, like those others, it was worked by human beings, and partly because of the weaknesses inherent in its own form of democracy. While claiming to be based upon a true understanding of the Rights of Man, those rights were over great areas denied to the negroes; racial discrimination was, and is, as marked as in South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, and Nazi Germany. Lynch-law is not yet dead. Not until recently was the rule of Tammany broken. The cases of Tom Mooney and of Saccho and Vanzetti were conspicuous examples of miscarriage of justice; and even if these were exceptions, they were the kind of exception which never ought to have been permitted. Certain defects of American democracy, such as graft and partial justice and municipal corruption, it may be said, are due to the operation of the democratic principle, for which the system of direct popular election of judges, magistrates, and mayors has been responsible. In America the abuses of democracy have been as evident as elsewhere, and perhaps more than in other lands has the plutocracy had a decisive say in the nation's affairs.

As we survey the record of the democratic countries there is much which we meet to discourage those sympathisers with democracy who believe that the tree should be judged not by an abstract definition of it but by the fruit which it has borne. Democracy, like any other human institution, is liable to be abused, and general indifference towards it in so-called democratic states must be attributed to a general mood rather than to the nature of democracy itself, even though the latter contains the seeds of its own disintegration. This indifference is due to a great extent to the forces which are driving democracy into what Ortega calls "hyperdemocracy," that is democracy after it has become a kind of mass-consciousness, which is one of the greatest dangers to political as to every other kind of thought. But hyperdemocracy, the absolute rule of the statistical majority, is nevertheless one of the developments of democracy itself, stultifying the sense of individual responsibility, and its most sinister expression is the arrival of the mass-man, of the man who belongs not to the people but to the crowd. In our examination of the failures of democracy, therefore, we should give some attention to this question of the mass-man.

4

The mass, the "hyperdemocracy," is the corruption, the running-out, as it were, of democracy. Its study, from the practical angle, has been properly called "mass observation," which is a typical product of these latter years. Instead of being concerned with rights and duties, with moral-political values, with the things which go towards the making of culture and civilization, with the exercise of judgment in forming opinions and electing representatives, the mass is concerned only with the imposition of its own will and the dissemination of its own taste, or lack of taste, the principle of the confluence or coalescence of its unit-members being not an ideal but a kind of indeterminate or irresistible fluidity. It is against differentiation, and in favour of imposing its own uniformity, disliking the heretic, and therefore exercising the

tyranny of orthodoxy. The character of the mass-man can be best realized by comparing the mass with the group, a comparison which has been admirably expressed by Ortega y Gasset.¹

In his dissection of the mass-man, Ortega attributes his arrival to a combination of factors which have led to the formation of the modern world: liberal democracy, scientific experiment, and industrialism; but the positive fruits of this combination, the legacy of the nineteenth century, the mass-man is unable to appreciate, for he is too preoccupied with himself to relate his experience to anything outside his own immediate horizon. This "radical ingratitude," as Ortega calls it, gives him the appearance of a spoilt child. He has, further, no norms, no standards of reference, the absence of which constitutes a form of barbarism.

If it be agreed that the mass-man is, to a considerable extent, the child of democracy, it will be instructive to inquire into the manner in which ochlocracy—mass-rule—can be regarded as the corruption of democracy.

In the first place, the democratic principles of political rights (liberty and equality) have become so exaggerated that the mass-man, in making his claim to liberty, has lost, if he ever possessed it, the sense of discipline, without which democracy is bound to disintegrate. The mass-man is free to take what civilization has to offer him without regarding himself as under any obligation to give and to conserve values in return as part of his own contribution to the life of the community, which is in reality his own life. He demands certain rights as owing to him, but his possession of them does not lead him to offer his services to the community in return. So he continues to demand them, and often fails to appreciate them when he obtains them. Being free, he does not necessarily consider himself involved in any reciprocal responsibility. Further, making a dogma of equality, he is unable, or unwilling, to appreciate differentiation, for in his opinion Jack is as good as his master, and he will not tolerate any distinctions of class, fortunes, and so on. He therefore wishes to impose his own tastes on the rest of the community, and those who provide him with his pleasures, having first created the appetite for them, are obliged to continue feeding it. He does not wish his own taste to be improved, his interests to be broadened and deepened, his thought to be enriched, because he will not acknowledge that he is in any need of improvement. What he values is what ten million others value too. Consequently, the circulation of the so-called popular Press has enormously increased, while during the same period responsible weekly reviews have either disappeared or have had to be amalgamated. The mass-man has little discrimination: he sees the same films, reads the same paper, looks at the same advertisements, does the same

¹ "In those groups which are characterized by not being a crowd or mass, the affective coincidence of their members consists in whatever desire, idea, or ideal in itself excludes the great majority." A mass, on the contrary, is that "which does not indulge in its own valuation, in pronouncing things to be good, or bad, by giving special reasons, but feels 'like everybody else,' and, of course, is not in the least concerned when it is conscious of seeing things exactly as others see them. . . . The characteristic thing of our time is that the vulgar soul, knowing itself to be vulgar, has the impudence to affirm the right to be vulgar and to impose its standard everywhere. . . . The mass takes no notice of what is different, what is distinguished, individual, and select. Whoever is not 'like everybody else,' who does not think in the same way as the rest, runs the risk of being eliminated." *Obras Completas*, Madrid, 1936, vol. I, p. 59, vol. II, p. 1,162.

kind of work, hears the same unceasing output of swing-music, as ten million others, and is as out of touch as they are with creative experiences. Consequently he becomes sceptical as to whether what are declared to be "higher" values are actually higher than, and not just different from, those to which he is accustomed; and from his scepticism is derived cynicism. He has just ceased to care, and he does not want to be troubled by any demands made upon what should be a good citizen's sense of responsibility. Absolute moral standards have ceased to exist for him: he himself is the measure of all things.

The mass-man, the degenerate child of democracy, so to speak, tends to be cynical about politics and culture because he does not understand them, nor does he particularly desire them, for he is the satisfied man, the *hombre satisfecho*, as Ortega calls him. The mass-man is one of the most conspicuous features of the modern world-landscape, whether democratic or totalitarian, whether he becomes part of a fluid mass through his own indolence and through being appealed to by a technique which puts ease before effort of mind, or whether he is stamped out in a standardized figure by the dictator-machine. In either case he has ceased, in the fullest sense, to be an individual, and because he is a universal phenomenon he is to be reckoned with.

Man, in the mass-age, is being de-individualized, and democracy is running to seed. The continuance of civilization, of cultural values, of intelligent politics, cannot be considered the mass-man's especial responsibility and care. He has not the ability, the idealism, or the general concern for values necessary if what is described as a new order is to be anything more than the pious hope of idealists. Civilization, if it is to continue, will be the care of oligarchies, of enlightened groups who are strong enough to ignore the mass-man, unless the latter, having rebelled against culture, is somehow redeemed, unless democracy recovers its sense of trained discrimination, and once more becomes concerned with duties as well as rights and strikes deeper roots. The defeatism and self-seeking so evident among the French politicians of the last decade were evidence of the absence of probity, public spirit, of a vital concern for spiritual norms; French democracy had ceased to have any moral basis, and its roots withered. In the democratic countries, almost without exception, general apathy towards politics was jeopardising the survival of cultural and political values; governments did what they liked, and popular opinion, because it was so fluid and indeterminate, was unable to take any decisive line of action. No wonder that the totalitarian statesmen, knowing just what they wanted, overruled apathy and opposition alike in order to get it. But civilization cannot be preserved by such methods; in its deepest sense it cannot be preserved for any length of time unless democracy is rejuvenated, that is, until listlessness and a cynical, sceptical attitude towards politics has been replaced by a positive, dynamic activity. Democracy, in being the only alternative to an oligarchy unrestricted in its operations, is the only form of government potentially able to rescue the things that are precious from the jaws of the Beast from the Abyss; but if it is to fulfil such a knightly mission its spirit must be radically changed. It must rediscover its spiritual origin, and overcome its modern purely humanist phase, which has paradoxically led, as Berdyaev has eloquently indicated, to the dehumanization of the human image, to anti-humanism, of which one of the most disturbing symptoms is the

mass-man. Democracy, in order to avoid a further corruption into ochlocracy, into the rule of the mass-man, must retrieve its foundation in the moral consciousness of man. It must be again concerned, as it once was, with the ethical and the spiritual, for man is primarily an ethical and a spiritual being.

5

To the question "Can democracy safeguard civilized values?" there is only one clear reply. It is that unless it can, no other political system can. The other existing systems are destroying culture, humane ways of living, and the cultural legacies of generations. The democratic countries alone, the countries which believe in freedom, are able to offer themselves as the repositories for spiritual and cultural values which make the life of man civilized.

In the first place, they are nearer to the Christian, which is the only true humanist, tradition. They have not broken so evidently and so completely with the main Christian-European tradition as Germany has done; and Japan has never caught up with it. In spite of her superficial Westernization, her way of living is alien from that of the West, though she owes to it much of her imperialism. Russia, though not a democratic state, is at least a state organized for, if not by, the people, but though it is quite possible that she may show a more democratic mood, and that the Constitution of 1936 will be given more practical effect than it has hitherto received, there is little evidence of this at present.

Secondly, the English-speaking democracies have achieved inner peace to a greater extent than other nations, and as this reflects a deeper spiritual certainty and harmony they will be better able to contribute balance to a world which is now reaching the breaking-point of tension. Having realized inner peace themselves, with no further aggressive ambitions to disturb it, they can offer it to others, and having experienced popular sovereignty even in an imperfect form they will be able to guide other nations towards it, though without imposing their own forms upon those peoples in whom it has not organically developed.

The meaning of history is to be found in the progressive realization of freedom; democracy alone, by virtue of its profession of faith, is able to provide the framework within which freedom can become a reality. It is doubtful, however, if there will ever be anything approaching a guarantee of European peace until Germany becomes a democracy, which means that she will have to undergo a profound change of heart as well as of political institution. How this is to be achieved cannot be foretold, though one may suggest that acute suffering and the experience on her own territory of what war means may be a preliminary. Her aggressive, militaristic spirit has hitherto been most articulate in the military caste, in the Junkers, the nationalist historians and philosophers, politicians and propagandists. With their liquidation there may be a chance for a German democracy to grow; for when their oppressive leader-groups, which know how to appeal to the Germans' love of wielding power and worshipping it, are no longer there,

the German people may take their destiny into their own hands instead of entrusting it to their autocrats. Unless that happens the vision of perpetual peace is likely to fade with the passing of the years.

In the meantime world-leadership rests with those who passionately believe in freedom, and whose political forbears regarded freedom as one of the "rights" to which man was naturally entitled and which required no apologia because they were the gift of the Creator. The American Declaration of Independence is a signal example of this conception of "rights," and it was a Puritan-Anglosaxon conception, grounded in a deep religious consciousness. Its justification was theological rather than political, and had no relation to the modern preoccupation with economic democracy. The sovereignty of the people was for it a first principle, but not for the sake of the exercise of power; rather as a means of safeguarding eternal ethical categories for oneself and for others. Government was an instrument of the people for the purpose of maintaining liberty. That, at any rate, was the theory.

It was the theory because democracy is based on a certain view of human nature, to be professed or rejected in accordance with whether one believes man to be a free individual, an economic animal, a physiological mechanism to be scientifically conditioned, a unit in a collectivized society, or a person capable of the knowledge of God. The philosophers of the Enlightenment accepted the first of these alternatives, the seventeenth century Puritans and the American democrats of the eighteenth century the last, as their reason for believing in the first. They believed, too, that what man is he is in the light of what he can be; actuality takes its shape from an ideal potentiality. This should be kept in mind in speaking of the ability of democracy to safeguard civilization, and in discussing the question, "Can democracy recover?"

Democracy can recover; but its recovery will not be spontaneous or unaided. That is why what might be called the surgical operation of the present time should be regarded as a means to recovery, but even that will fail unless there is as a precondition sufficient health in the body, for no operation can be successful unless the patient has the will to live. One of the factors necessary to recovery must be democracy's own attitude towards itself. It must cease, where it is at all conscious of itself, being introspective, centripetal.

To do this democracy must concern itself not primarily with rights, but with duties; with looking outwards, rather than inwards. For although it is important to conserve rights, it is also important to confer them. While thinking about maintaining the liberties to which man as a human being or, in Christian terms, as a potential child of God, is entitled, democracy must at the same time take a leaf out of the totalitarian book and realise that its salvation will come through the inculcation and practice of the principle of service for the community. Cain was "free," free to exercise the power to kill; his freedom was that of the political or moral anarchist, for he did not react favourably to the thought that he might be his brother's keeper. Democrats must be concerned not with their own freedom as a political, natural, or religious "right," but with the service of the whole, with the improvement of their brother's lot and the extension to all of the privileges

which have hitherto been the prerogative of the few. Christianity, incidentally, has little to say about rights, but much about duties, though it is partly through Christianity that men became aware of their "inalienable rights." But the teaching of Jesus in its ethical aspect is primarily about duties; hence the parables about the Samaritan, the Sheep and the Goats, the end of the one about the Prodigal Son. *Agapé*, charity, is not centripetal but centrifugal; it is concerned not with itself but with what is outside.

In the realm of politics what is required is an adequate balance of rights against duties. A democratic society must be concerned with rights; but an obsession with them leads to anarchy. Lord Bryce conceived the ideal democrat in the following terms, which, it will be noticed, relate to obligations rather than to the claiming of certain rights:

In it (the ideal community) the average citizen will give close and constant attention to public affairs, recognizing that this is his interest as well as his duty. He will try to comprehend the main issues of policy, bringing to them an independent and impartial mind, which thinks first not of his own but of the general interest. . . . Never failing to come to the polls, he will vote for his party candidate only if he is satisfied of his capacity and honesty. He will be ready to serve on a local board or council, and to be put forward as a candidate for the legislature, because public service is recognized as a duty. With such citizens as executors, the legislature will be composed of upright and capable men, single-minded in their wish to serve the nation.¹

There must be many such men in and out of public life. It is they who give character to true democracy, no matter to what party they belong, and only when this type is multiplied can a democracy function with efficiency. It becomes even more clear that what makes a democracy is a spirit, an attitude, rather than a cut-and-dried system.

If it is true of the spiritual sphere that the "kingdom of God is within you," it is also true that democracy, as well as being expressed in the organization of the state, must be something coming from "within." In no other way can the moral values organic to civilization and to the forward march of history be conserved; for neither civilization nor history consists purely of outside forces or forms, such as the transmission of technical achievement, the erection of up-to-date flats, universal electrification, and the contact of state with state. It is by its fruits that the tree is known: so much pragmatism attaches to religion and politics alike; but the tree must be healthy if it is to produce good fruit.

The problem, therefore, for the immediate future, will be the recovery by democracy of its old spiritual basis so that it may become again what it was originally intended to be: the sovereignty of the people rather than of the undifferentiated mass-man. It is doubtful whether this can happen without a return to its Christian foundation; for in its Western-European form it is a Christian heritage, above all a Protestant heritage. English and American democracy arose from a revolt against ecclesiastical and political totalitarianism; its growth in America owed much to the experience of its founders as religious Independents.² The tradition is not yet dead, but it is weakening. Yet the West will be able to fulfil its historic mission as the agent and conservator

¹ *Modern Democracies*, Macmillan, vol. I, pp. 53-4.

² One should not forget, however, that religious tolerance was as foreign to the early settlers in Massachusetts as was intolerance to the men who wrote the American Constitution.

of civilization only if it remains true to itself, that is, to the Western-Christian scheme of political, social, and religious values.¹

This is a conclusion to which anyone who examines the diseases of European politics from a Christian standpoint is committed. Yet it can have practical value only in so far as the Christianizing of democracy and the recovery of its essential nature can be envisaged. The fundamental democratic principles are axiomatic; they are regarded as conforming to the nature of man as a spiritual being; their vindication is ultimately a theological rather than a political task; and because Christianity claims to state the final truth about life they have their origin in something more than a passing political mood. If democracy is sick, if it has failed, or has been defeated, in many lands, it is not because it is inherently weak, effete, and incapable of survival. For its failure in France and Germany and its weaknesses in America and Britain and elsewhere there are causes which are attributable to the weaknesses of human nature rather than to the essential unworkability of the democratic system, though this does not mean that democracy is any more infallible than any other system, the human material of its structure being what it is. It can be improved only when those who desire to work it are better citizens.

History is, in great measure, the story of liberty; for it is when man moves from slavery to liberty, from oligarchic or absolutist rule to self-government, that the great rhythmic forward-movement of history is perceived and the major changes in social and political organization take place. The next phase of the movement towards freedom may be through the provision of economic security, for no democracy can survive any length of time without guaranteeing to men and women the basic security necessary to a civilized life, and democracy will be judged, empirically, by its ability to do this. Most people would be willing to sacrifice some measure of liberty in order to obtain security, and it is natural that they should do so. Germany succumbed to the Nazis largely because they promised such security, even at the cost of restricting their liberty. But an exclusive concern with security can lead to a materialistic view of life and of the state which, as in Nazi Germany, results in the complete and final denial of liberty as a principle. True freedom there never can be as long as man is not in a position to determine the course of his own life, and this he cannot do while he is in a state of economic precariousness. On the other hand, it is man's right to be free which is responsible for the insistent demand that he should not be at the mercy of whatever economic

¹ It is encouraging to know that this is recognized by some, though such recognition is not widespread. Thus Mr. Michael Roberts writes: "Democracy cannot be maintained except through self-discipline, the hard determination and concentration of energy that come from religious truth." (*The Recovery of the West*, Faber, p. 315.) Mr. Harold Butler, too, seems to have the same kind of thing in mind as he concludes his survey of the inter-war years: "Though we are aghast at the Nazi revolt against the Christian doctrines of love and charity, they are still far from being the common motives of action in international affairs. In the long run they are the only foundations upon which a real civilization can be built. A world of self-seeking nations is bound to be as unstable as a society of self-seeking individuals devoid of any generosity to each other or of any attachment to the public good. More than for any other reason the peace was lost because the policies of nations were empty of charity towards each other, dictated by nothing nobler than a close-fisted calculation of self-interest." (*The Lost Peace*, Faber, p. 219.) The inter-war years were a signal example of judgment upon non-moral, or, as it is customary to describe them, realistic policies. The democratic countries fall under the same judgment as that which has overtaken the aggressive nations. In this is exemplified the "unity" of history and the universality of historical judgment.

blizzards may sweep across the world and be made to submit to the fluctuations of the money-market. Here economic planning will have a considerable part to play in the re-organization of life; and though planning will be the work of experts and technicians, it is the people who should demand that a planned state should be the immediate aim of politics. Otherwise the planned state is likely to become an absolutist state, and the issue will not be one of planning for freedom but for efficiency or something undemocratic.

It is therefore essential that freedom and responsibility should be considered vital elements in the projection of any society which is to be democratic in structure, for unless these are given their proper position the second World War will not perhaps have been fought in vain, but the ultimate aims of those who were drawn into it will not have been realized.

BOOK THREE—POLITICS AND ETHICS

CHAPTER I

THE ETHICAL CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

I

IN the thirteenth chapter of *The Revolt of the Masses* Ortega y Gasset, dealing with the power of the state and the tyranny of the masses as the major perils with which modern man is threatened, expresses the conviction that violence, as the characteristic of the mass-spirit, has to-day

arrived at the point of maximum development, and that is a good symptom, for it means that automatically its decline is about to begin. Violence is the true rhetoric of the time: the rhetoricians, the empty-headed, have made it their own language.¹

Written in 1930, these words were not only a picture of the mood of the time but a prophetic forecast of the extension of that mood throughout great parts of Europe during the nineteen thirties, and which has become associated with the "statification" (*estatificación*) of modern life. Such "statification" is the great menace to civilization because it means the absorption by the state of all social spontaneity. Man lives for a machine: the government; the individual is little more than a means to an end. The state, created by society as an instrument, has become its master.

Such was Ortega's view of the modern state. It is a view, perhaps, which owes something to the anarchism which seems to appeal to the Spaniard when he is allowed to pursue his political inclinations uninterfered with by outsiders; however this may be, it does express that liberal-democratic spirit which sees in the individual the spiritual centre of society and of the state. Recognizing that the crowd is uncreative, capable of performing only the most elementary functions in thought and action, producing neither art nor science, and exercising a pressure which is distasteful to the individual soul, Ortega deplors the process of collectivization and the tyrannous exercise of power resulting from it.²

The "statification" of social life and oppression by the collective of the individual life are two symptoms of the trend of contemporary life, the stuff from which history is being woven. They are examples of the extension of the irrational and demonic over human life *through* human agencies, and cause grave concern to those who prize differentiation, individuality, and spiritual freedom. They take the form of ever-increasing action by the executive, of the swift extension of the authority of the state over a rapidly growing number of aspects of life, and are promoted in the name of "equality," "justice,"

¹ José Ortega y Gasset, *Obras Completas*, Madrid, 1936, II, p. 1,223.

² *España Invertebrada* (Engl. trans., pub. Allen and Unwin, 1936): "The abstract divinity of the collective is coming back to exercise its tyranny; indeed, it is already creating havoc in Europe. . . . Day by day the government forces us to give a larger part of our existence to society. Man is left no corner to retire to, no solitude for himself. The masses protest angrily against any reserve which we hold back for ourselves."

"destruction of privilege," and the like. They cannot be omitted from any historical, sociological, or political analysis, for in their practical manifestations they confront us with the issues presented by the existence and behaviour of the modern state. The more extensive the activity of the state, the more are we driven to ask the questions: What is the state for? What is its nature? What should be the scope and limits of state action? What philosophy should be behind it? This crisis in thinking about the state is an indication of the intellectual and spiritual uncertainty and of the revolutionary impatience of the age as well as of the essentially fluid character of all political thinking. Various periods of history are characterized by the emergence of different power-seeking groups; this age is the age of the mass-man and of the state which he is creating: the age of Socialism, Fascism (now formally defunct in Europe, but not without its points of contact with the systems which have combined to destroy it), and of the exercise of centralized pressure upon aspects of political and social activity which were formerly considered to lie on the perimeter.

It is, therefore, the very nature of the state that is in question; but what matters most is what the state actually does in practice, not what it in theory claims to be, though the latter, in contemporary revolutionary conceptions of the state, determines the former; and that is why it is important to examine the ethical ideas which underlie the structure of any form of state. The distinction between the totalitarian and the democratic-liberal views of life and of politics corresponds to a deeply seated difference in ethical outlook and particularly in regard to notions of human rights. A state with a Christian-Protestant tradition is built upon a conception of rights which differs very markedly from that held, say, by Nazi Germany or Socialist Russia. The very nature of the democratic-liberal state is conceived in terms of how far it promotes the individual life and protects the personalities of those who come within its jurisdiction; whereas in absolutist states in their most thorough-going form the personality of the individual becomes merged in that of the collective, of the *Volk* or class, to the greater glory of the state. Again, the "Machiavellian" conception of the state, that which has its practical expression in unrestricted power-politics, differs fundamentally from that which, for example, is held in the British Commonwealth of Nations, subject though the latter is to the ethical limits which are imposed by all political interest.

If, then, there is this profound ethical distinction between the modes of operation of states based upon different or opposing political philosophies, it will be profitable to inquire into this question of the ethical conception of the state itself as the dynamic centre from which flow the currents composing historical movement.

2

It may appear to some to be useless or unprofitable to inquire whether the sanctions by which the state enforces its authority or from which it derives its *raison d'être* should be divine or human, for it is far from the nature of the modern man to make such an inquiry. The time when an emperor shivered in the snow on the papal threshold belongs to a past ordering of European

society which will not return. Ecclesiastics do not often nowadays rebuke the secular power in words comparable with those used to Constantius II by Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, though in Nazi Germany and in the occupied territories men such as Cardinal Faulhaber, Dr. Niemoeller, Bishop Berggrav, and the leaders of the Dutch churches, have won for themselves distinguished places in the history of Christian heroism.¹ Secular society no longer bows in awe before the impressiveness of the spiritual power.

Augustine held that the civil power should be the servant of the Church (a kind of inverted erastianism), going much farther than Hosius, who believed in the division between the secular and ecclesiastical spheres. Medieval theologians, deriving their notions from Romans 13, agreed that even "evil" rulers should not be resisted. So, for example, Gregory the Great: the sovereign being the Lord's anointed, even bishops should not interfere in affairs which were under the jurisdiction of the baron.

Luther's position, like that of other Reformers, was ambiguous. Unable to solve the dilemma of rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's when it is not quite clear which is which, on the one hand he advocated a definite demarcation between the realm of civil government and that of the church, and on the other maintained that the Christian has a right to challenge the secular authority in certain circumstances.² Early in his career he believed the function of the ruler to be divinely sanctioned.³

Calvin, however, regarded the Church and the state as two aspects of the sovereignty of God. The Calvinistic state was a kind of police-state, but at the same time a moral institution concerned not only with efficient government but with the morals of the citizen. As he organized it at Geneva it became, in effect, a totalitarian tyranny, maintained by a cunning system of espionage with international ramifications, in which there was no practical distinction between the civil and the religious power. This attitude towards Church and state made it difficult to distinguish between heresy and rebellion (as must be the case in all theocracies), and Calvin's celebrated treatment of Servetus and Castellio is a conspicuous example of what happens when the persecuted heretic becomes the persecutor made secure by his own orthodoxy. For Calvin, as for Luther, all power came from God and received His sanction.

¹ Hosius: "I have been a confessor in the persecution that your grandfather Maximian raised against the Church. If you wish to renew it you will find me ready to suffer all rather than to betray the truth and to shed innocent blood. . . . Remember that you are a mortal man. Fear the day of judgment. . . . Do not interfere in ecclesiastical affairs or dictate anything about them to us, but rather learn from us what you ought to believe concerning them. God has given you the government of the Empire and to us that of the Church. Whoever dares to impugn your authority sets himself against the order of God. Take care lest you likewise render yourself guilty of a great crime by usurping the authority of the Church. We are commanded to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. It is not lawful for us to arrogate to ourselves the imperial authority. You also have no power to minister in holy things." Despite the encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* the Vatican has not been conspicuous in making a frontal attack on secular tyranny.

² "No law may be imposed upon Christians by any authority whatsoever, by man or by angels, except by his own consent, for we are free of all things. What is done otherwise is gross tyranny." (*The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*.) "If the civil magistrate interferes with spiritual matters, with conscience, in which God alone must rule, we ought not to obey at all, but rather lose our head." (*Commentary on II Peter*.)

³ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (on Ro. 13, 1).

Practically his policy showed hostility to kings, but not to magistrates, and, paradoxically enough, out of an unbearable piece of ecclesiastical autocracy rose the foundation of political democracy. (A peculiar example of the political application of Calvinistic totalitarianism was the declaration of war by the Scottish Assembly on Charles I.) Calvin makes quite clear his views on civil government, though he, too, is rather perplexed by the problem of what the Christian should do if the ruler orders the doing of something which may not be morally defensible.¹ The secular executive is empowered by divine sanction to administer a moral code and to impose order. John Locke, too, writing from a very different standpoint, regarded the state as a form provided by God "to restrain the partiality and violence of men" by superseding the Law of Nature, which makes every man a judge in his own case and would result in anarchy if not severely restricted. The Medieval and Calvinistic views of the relations of secular government to the Divine order and Locke's *Treatises on Civil Government* were conceived in an intellectual environment so different from that of the modern world that it appears quaint to ask if the state can be regarded as having metaphysical justification. As long as the state does its work, it is argued, it is not necessary to ask questions about its theory.

Professor Laski, for example, thinks that the philosophical or idealist notion of the state is useless, for it is not what a state is thought to be, ideally, but what it actually does, which is of importance. For the philosophical view of the state he would substitute the empirical, the former being not a conception of the state as it actually exists and acts in practice, but an abstract idea of what it theoretically ought to be. The citizen, he says, infers the nature of the state from the character of its governmental acts.

"A state is what its government does; what any given theory requires that government should do to fulfil the ideal purposes of the state is merely a criterion for judging it, not an index to its actual purpose."²

"The index to the nature of any actual state is the system of economic class-relationships which characterize it."

The main feature of the state is its coercive power, and such power, Laski holds, is used in order to perpetuate and to protect particular groups which control the instruments of production at any given time. The essential nature of the state is not to seek the common welfare, but its

"power to compel the acceptance of class relationships which make that common welfare peripheral, not central to its aim."³

He rejects the idea that a more profound social conscience will establish the state as an organization seeking to realize the common good of its members. Assuming that such is the nature of the state, Laski adduces evidence of the

¹ "Let no man here deceive himself, since we cannot resist the magistrate without resisting God. . . . If we have respect for the Word of God it will . . . make us subject not only to the authority of those princes who honestly and faithfully perform their duty towards us, but all princes, by whatever means they have so become, although there is nothing they less perform than the duty of princes." Yet: "We are subject to the men who rule over us, but subject only in the Lord. If they command anything against Him, let us not pay the least regard to it, nor be moved by all the dignity which they possess as magistrates." (*Institutes*, Bk. IV, ch. 22.)

² H. Laski, *The State in Theory and Practice*, p. 74, Allen and Unwin.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

behaviour of states: the examples being of course capitalist states. A state is as it behaves; if capitalist states safeguard the interest of certain producing groups, then that is what the state proves to be: a coercive organization designed to protect those groups and nothing else. In Soviet Russia, for example, the bias of the law will be towards the interests of the community as a whole, because the means of production are owned by the nation. The nature of states, like that of individuals, is to be judged by their deeds.

As a statement about what states *do* there is little in all this to cause disagreement. Yet ultimately what a state does depends upon its ideology, except, possibly, in capitalist democracies, where the relation between theory and practice is less marked than in the totalitarian states. Laski includes Hitlerite Germany among the states whose aim is to protect the interests of the capitalists; but although German industrialists contributed lavishly to the Nazi funds before the party became the government, it was the capitalists who complained most loudly about the state's continual encroachment upon individual freedom and initiative in business. Conversations with German business men before the war about the innumerable regulations imposed by the *Arbeitsfront* should have discredited the idea that the Nazi state was merely an instrument of the capitalists. If the Nazi state was anyone's instrument, outside the party's, it was possibly the army's, though even that is doubtful. For here we have an example of the modelling of the behaviour of a state on the philosophical conception of its nature, which Laski would reject as useless and untenable. It is not the behaviour alone of the Nazi state in its coercive, legislative, or juridical aspects which evokes disgust, but its official ideology, the very philosophy which brought the new state into being. The corpus of *Reichsgesetzblätter* in which were published from time to time the new laws passed by the German government was evidence of the organic growth of a state inspired by a philosophy which, if in democratic eyes was loathsome or ridiculous, was nevertheless potent enough when supported by the use of force to an unlimited extent. The general statement that "the index to the nature of any actual state is the system of economic class-relationships which characterize it" was scarcely applicable to the Nazi state, for its fundamental conception was not one of economic or class-relationships but race, *Blut und Boden*, the *völkische Staat*. The Nazi state did not protect any one particular class: every class was liable to be suspected by the Gestapo, and because of the brutal technique of government practised by its executive, it is precisely on the moral plane that the nature of the Nazi state is to be condemned. In spite of Laski's contention that a philosophical conception of the state (that is, the idealist conception) is no indication of what a state does in actuality, in this particular case it is, being the direct product of its formative ideology. In any case, Laski's near-Marxism tends to obscure from him the possibility that there are other considerations outside those of production and class-relationships which provide the key to the nature of the state.

From the Christian standpoint it is not only the protection of an alleged producing class in its own interest that calls for criticism, but the whole nature of the state as Nazism ideologically conceived it and carried it out in practice. Nazi domestic and foreign policy were the practical application

of the ideas in *Mein Kampf*.¹ This does not mean that class-ideals do not play a conspicuous part in history or in the character of the state: on the contrary they play a very conspicuous rôle; but they are not the only factor; indeed, a case has been made out for the view that it is the inadequacy of the purely economic outlook which has been largely responsible for the rise of the corporative state.²

Despite Professor Laski's contention, it does matter very much what kind of a theory lies behind the conduct of a state. Coercion is a necessary means of securing the enforcement of law: that is common to all types of states. That which differentiates states from each other, however, is the kind of coercion used in order to secure the enforcement of the *kind* of laws the governing hierarchy considers it desirable to enforce. If states are expected to behave in a way which is approved by a Christian conscience, it is necessary to work out some political philosophy which will in the first place condition the empirical character of the state and set limits to what it may or may not do. There can be a right kind of state and a wrong kind; and whether any particular state is a right or a wrong kind depends, for the moralist, on the kind of philosophy behind it. If ethics is an important element in individual life, it is an equally important element in the behaviour of states, not only in their relations with each other, but also in their relations with their own citizens. Fichte, in his earlier period, is nearer the mark than Laski in holding that the "duty of a state does not consist in protecting the mass of goods accumulated by somebody in preventing another who has nothing from getting something, but its true aim is to procure for its subjects that which is their due as members of mankind and to maintain them in their possession." That is, the state is the protector of rights, not of property, and in this Fichte was in agreement with other German political philosophers of the time, and with the group who advocated the "organic" conception of the state, in opposing the view that the chief function of the state was materialistic, i.e. to protect an economic group and to maintain it in its position of privilege. Whether the state is able to do this is largely dependent upon the ethical ideas which support its structure, and upon the ethical conceptions of those who form the executive and the legislature; though ultimately no conception of the state can be imposed and made effective without the application, or the potential application, of force and of veiled power.

The Christian believes in an objective rightness or wrongness of things, and this extends, naturally, to the order of the state. Others, not conspicuous for the consistency of their religious beliefs, have also held this view. Even Bismarck, the master of *Realpolitik*, held that the state should have a religious-ethical foundation, namely, a Christian one.³ He may have believed this as a theoretical truth, or he may merely have paid lip-service to such a view

¹ See *Mein Kampf*, especially vol. II, ch. 2-4 (ed. 1932).

² Cf. Peter Drucker, *The End of Economic Man* (1938).

³ "If we acknowledge at all the religious foundation of the state, that foundation can here only be Christianity. If we remove this foundation from the state, there remains as a state nothing more than a casual aggregation of rights. . . . Its legislation can therefore not be inspired by the fountain of eternal truth, but by vague and changeable conceptions of humanity which exist only in the minds of those who rule." Quoted by H. M. Müller, *Macht und Glaube*, Munich, 1933, p. 182.

of the divine sanctions for the existence of the state. As a German Protestant of the nineteenth century he no doubt held that the spheres of religious belief and of political action did not touch. In this he was no better and little worse than his contemporaries. Masaryk, too, though with more sincerity, believed in the moral conception of the state and in its Christian foundation.¹ A liberal-nationalist (rather like Mazzini) he urged upon his people the need to take the Christian religion as the only proper basis for its national life, though he regarded the state, clearly, as a human, not a divine institution and rejected the view that it exists for the maintenance of class or group interests, which for him would be the misuse of the state.² Yet despite the profound religious convictions of its first president there was nothing specifically "Christian" about the Czech state, for the reason that it had no more means than any other modern state of imposing a Christian view of life upon its citizens. It was no different, in its behaviour as a state, from any other enlightened liberal-democracy.

According to the Friedrich Gogarten, the well-known Lutheran theologian, the state is the state only when it functions in a protective capacity for the purpose of safeguarding members of society against forces which can be called "evil."³ Its purpose is therefore, in theory, to safeguard the good: its function and nature are therefore ethical, and it must have an ethical basis. This is a more accurate description of what the state is than the bald statement that the foundation of a state can only be Christianity, or that no state can prosper unless it has an ethical basis. There are states which have no Christian foundation; in fact no state has an avowedly Christian foundation; and states without an ethical basis (in the Christian sense of the word) do prosper, even when they infringe "the broad rules of human morality." The state, however, does protect the individual from "evil," if that state be a civilized one, in so far as it sets up a mechanism for the restraint of thieves and violent men and protects, however inadequately, the rights of the individual, and it furthers the "good" by promoting education, better health, facilities for culture, and the other amenities of a civilized society. It not only performs a useful function, but achieves a good object in promoting and extending services which are socially valuable, and in doing so is more than an administrative machine or the protector of economic class-relationships. But it can safeguard the "good" only by using, or threatening to use, force. A state without force at the disposal of the executive cannot be regarded as having any historical existence, for once the right to use force is abandoned the result will be anarchy. Force, therefore, is an integral element in the life of the state, and from the Christian standpoint, once this is admitted, the use of force is justified on ethical

¹ "No state or policy can prosper unless the groundwork is moral. The ethical basis of all politics is humanity; and humanity is an international programme. . . . No state can be managed without recognizing the ethical basis of politics, and no state can stand long if it infringes the broad rules of human morality." (*Ideals of Humanity*, Allen and Unwin, 1938.)

² *The Making of a State*, Allen and Unwin, p. 409, see pp. 402-441.

³ "The state possess its ethical quality only so far as by means of its sovereignty, of its right over the lives and property of its subjects, it is able to keep away the evil of which individuals may become the victims. Without the perception of evil and its power over the individual as it is expressed in the categorical demand 'Thou shalt,' there can be no recognition of the state as such. . . . Only when one is aware of the capacity of man for evil can one really be aware of the state." (*Politische Ethik*, p. 117.)

grounds; what is of supreme importance, however, is that the motive behind its application should be moral, and its exercise not irresponsible, directed against any one class or in order to maintain unjust relationships within the community, but severely limited by reference to the achievements of moral ends. Treitschke is not wrong in maintaining that the state is power, but in holding that its nature is to be understood in terms of power alone. The state does, and must, exercise power; but one has not said everything in admitting that to be true.

"If we apply the standards of Christian morality to the state, and if we can bear in mind that the essence of this great collective individuality is power, we realize that the highest moral duty of the state is to maintain its power. The individual must be sacrificed for the sake of a higher community of which he is a member. . . . In the whole history of the world there has never been anything set above the state. . . . The state is Power, and if it is false to its own nature, no punishment can be too severe for it."¹

Here, in germ, is the modern German doctrine of the totalitarian state. Treitschke believed, too, that the state has a moral obligation, though that obligation is not the protection of the good or the suppression of the bad; it is the maintenance of power in order to assure the nation of its ability to carry out its mission. The maintenance of power may be good, but it can also be bad, and it is more likely, to judge from past history, to be the latter than the former. Power as such has no ethical content. It is power for its own sake that Treitschke advocates, and his idea of the moral function of the state is so devoid of ethical content that it ceases to be capable of definition in ethical terms. It is a short step from Treitschke to Hitler, in spite of the latter's assertion that the state is a means to an end, and not an end in itself.² Hitler maintained that the state exists in order to maintain the life of the people, which is a perfectly obvious contention; this was the idea behind the racial idea of the state as conceived by the builders of the Third Reich.

The question of the state's right to exercise force causes disquiet in the minds of pacifists. For them there exists a severe tension brought about by the claims exercised by the state in time of war, which after all are only an extension of its peace-time claims. The resistance to these claims of the individual whose conscience decides that what the state tells him to do is wrong cannot be justified by repudiating the principle of force (or state-power) as such, for without power there can be no state. The state is but making an active use of what had previously been a potential exercise of power over the citizen. During time of war the British Government professed to be using force in order to end a situation in which proper relations between nations had been made impossible by the rejection by other states of the ethical basis of such relations. The British people, it was said, was fighting against "evil things," and on the face of it, it would appear that this was so. The decision of the nation to resort to unlimited force against another state which has broken the peace and abandoned all pretensions to decency in international and internal relations is one taken for ethical reasons, not merely because it fears its own extinction. There is an aspect in the behaviour of the state which suggests that one is entitled to regard it as having a moral foundation. What the state

¹ Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politics*, E. Tr., vol. I, p. 94. See also H. W. C. Davis, *The Political Ideas of Heinrich von Treitschke*.

² *Mein Kampf*, II, p. 433.

does is what, sometimes, one feels it *ought not* to do; and it is the fact of unfulfilled obligations towards its citizens which is usually the cause of revolution, which has a moral basis. The change in the form of the state after the English Civil War was not the result of re-adjusted economic class-relationships, but of a situation caused by moral protest, supported by force, against a tyranny. The "producers" were the same in 1660 as in 1640. The French and Russian revolutions were the revolt against an effete form of state of a dispossessed section of the community acutely aware of the injustices which it had suffered. Even the Nazi revolution was partly the result of a sense of frustration and of injury believed to be caused to national pride suffered by a great state. The French and Russian revolutions were followed by the readjustment of economic class-relationships and the transference of power from one class to another; but all major or total changes in the forms of states cannot be explained purely in economic terms, though every revolution has its economic consequences. The change in class-relationships which results in the change in the form of the state is the outcome of moral disapproval, the expression of the sense of injustice in those who feel they are not getting a fair share of the wealth and other amenities of the nation.

3

Our concern about the course of history and the nature of politics is closely related to a concern about the right behaviour of states. This statement gives rise to a whole series of questions. What, for example, is meant by right behaviour? When is it right, and who is to judge it to be right? Is a state "right" in following its own interests, or in putting the interests of other states first, even if it means the lowering of its own standard of living? If it is obliged to safeguard its own interests, what limit is to be imposed upon its behaviour? The Nazi view of "right" behaviour is notorious: the "right" is that which furthers the interests of the German people as interpreted by the Nazi party, *das was dem Volke dient*. The communist view of right behaviour is that which sharpens the class-struggle and brings nearer the day of the proletarian revolution. In the realm of practical politics, however, professedly Christian statesmen unfortunately do not always apply to governmental policies ethical standards which they would advocate in private life and the violation of which they would honestly deplore.¹ Nevertheless the Christian, believing in an objective rightness of things, believing therefore that there is a right and a wrong conduct for states, concludes that if states are to behave "rightly" in their internal and external operations as states, it should be possible to work out a specifically Christian conception of state ethics. He would go farther and say that unless such a conception is to be embodied in the policies of nations there can be no hope of an ultimate order of society in which evil, though not abolished, for human orders are subject to the reign of sin, can be to such an extent eradicated or transformed so that something approximating to a Christian society can be realized, and a

¹ Cf. R. Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 83 ff, and elsewhere.

just, "open" society substituted for the present agglomeration of "closed" societies.

Up to the present it would seem that the form of state which has held out some possibility of protecting Christian values most effectively has been the liberal-democratic type. It regards as "right" that which makes for liberty, tolerance, and free intercourse between nations. Catholic conceptions of the state, however, do not establish in one any confidence that such values as these can be preserved under the dominating influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Neither pre- nor post-Republican Spain provides a savoury example of a "Christian" state as a Protestant would conceive it; and the avowed aim of the Catholic Centre and Bavarian People's Parties was to extend the influence of the Vatican in the German state. The affirmation in the Programme of the Nazis party that the basis of the Nazi State was to be "positive Christianity" was only a sop thrown to Christian people who had no suspicion of what the Nazi meant by "positive Christianity." Rosenberg's book,¹ though disclaimed as an official expression of the attitude of the Nazis towards the Christian religion, has turned out in actuality to be a very good indication, even though a moderate one, of the alternative faith which is sponsored by sections of the party, and which is now to be regarded as the Nazi's substitute for the Christian religion², though the ideal of a *Volksgemeinschaft* is, as such, not incompatible with a Christian social ideal.

Hitherto, however, only the liberal-democratic form of state has been able to offer such a safeguard of Christian values as the Christian considers desirable, maintaining the principle, as it does, that personality, for its own sake, and not as a means to the achievement of some political end, is something to be protected and respected. I say *liberal*-democracy, because democracy by itself does not necessarily imply the preservation of the values which have come to be organic to Western civilization. Some forms of social democracy, for example, are intolerant towards religion and are thoroughly secularistic in character. A democracy can exercise a tyranny over a minority no less oppressive than that exercised by a minority in possession of the mechanism of the state. Mexico is a democracy, but it is not a liberal democracy, as is, for example, Switzerland or Britain. The Spanish conception of democracy was by no means liberal.³ In Britain the liberal-democratic elements were, during the heyday of political liberalism, closely associated with the Free Churches. Broadly speaking, the Scandinavian, Netherland, Swiss and Anglo-Saxon democracies embody the liberal-democratic ideals, even though they make no profession of incorporating Christian ideals in their constitutions. The Declaration of Independence was the work of the descendants of the

¹ A. Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (*The Myth of the Twentieth Century*).

² The Confessional theologian, Dr. Walther Kunneth, has exposed Rosenberg's misinterpretation of Christian theology and the fundamental opposition between his thought and evangelical Christianity in detail in his *Antwort auf den Mythos*, Berlin, 1935.

³ Ortega y Gasset has distinguished between democracy and liberal democracy as follows: "Democracy answers the question: 'Who ought to exercise public power?' The answer it gives is: 'the exercise of public power belongs to the citizens as a body' . . . Liberalism answers the question: 'Regardless of who exercises public power, what ought its limits to be?' Its answer is: 'Whether the public power is exercised by an autocrat or by the people it cannot be absolute. The individual has rights which are over and beyond any interference on the part of the state.'" (*España Invertebrada*.)

Puritan immigrants into America. With the exception of Germany, whose retarded political development has constituted the major European problem, Protestantism has given rise to varying degrees of liberal-democracy, in which certain spiritual values have been preserved which are less conspicuous in states possessing a Catholic or Orthodox religious background. The debt of economic liberalism to Protestantism has been examined by Max Weber and R. H. Tawney, though the inter-dependence of the two may have been exaggerated by them. It is not claiming too much when the assertion is made that those values which have come to be associated with Christian ethics are to be found flourishing most conspicuously in one-time Protestant states with a strong democratic tradition: freedom of mind, of conscience, a general respect for the rights of the individual personality, an abhorrence of injustice, and a conception of an "open" as opposed to a "closed" society.

Although liberal-democracy preserves such values as, on the political plane, can be represented as being most relevant to Christian morality in so far as it impinges upon the behaviour of the state, there is much in democracy itself as it now actually exists which is likely to lead to its own eventual disintegration. Whereas democracy as such does not necessarily provide for government by an élite, liberalism is not incompatible with such government; in fact some such conception of government is essential to liberalism at its best and most creative, and might be opposed to the statistical view of democracy as is now held. Liberalism is an attitude of mind, rather than a form of government, and without it democracy becomes government by the statistical or quantitative majority.

Dr. Hans Grimm, the distinguished German novelist, writing from a non-democratic standpoint, has expressed this contrast in the terms *Hochwertigkeit* and *Vermassung*,¹ words which, he acknowledges, are difficult to translate into English, but might be considered as implying respectively "qualitative aristocracy" and "mass-mindedness." He has in mind, no doubt, something approaching the idea of the *Führerschicht*, the national or racial hierarchy; but in a still broader sense liberalism is concerned with the maintenance of such an aristocracy of spirit, not only in the political but also in the cultural sphere. The idea of democracy as statistical, as *Vermassung*, is no less repugnant to liberals such as Ortega y Gasset and Madariaga,² both of whom, in their criticism of modern economic democracy, are in surprising agreement with the point of view expressed by Grimm.

Now, democracy seen as government by the quantitative majority does not take quality into consideration, nor is it in principle concerned with knowledge or experience as qualifications for determining the nature of the government which it thinks fit to put into office. Social-democracy thinks more or less in terms of economic categories, of production and distribution, regarding the use of the vote as a means of modifying or revolutionizing a particular economic system. A conservative democracy, on the other hand, is preoccupied with the maintenance of that system. On one occasion there may be sixteen million votes against fifteen million in favour of establishing

¹ Dr. Hans Grimm, *Englische Rede: Wie ich den Engländer sehe*, 1938.

² See Salvador de Madariaga, *Anarchy or Hierarchy?* Allen and Unwin, 1933, cf. also Berdyaev *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 11, ff.

a socialist state; on the next occasion, if the same principle of voting is permitted (and if it is not, the Socialist state cannot be considered a democracy) the decision may be reversed, a procedure which does not inspire much confidence in the competence of the democrats to choose their own government. In neither case is the majority necessarily qualified by expert knowledge or training in political thinking or in citizenship (usually the masses are indifferent to such things until an election, and sometimes even then) to choose those who are fittest to govern. Liberal-democracy, that is a politically educated democracy concerned not merely with education in things which promote a particular party or group-economic class-interest, but with the maintenance of those values which are calculated to promote a national life embodying the various forms of liberty already mentioned, is the only political alternative to the intolerant creeds which appeal to the inflammable passions of class or nation. And if democracy (in the general sense) as the antithesis to totalitarianism is to be humanized and (to use a previously employed term) "redeemed" it will, on the purely political plane, be through being permeated by the attitude of mind called liberalism; and by liberalism I do not mean simply the principles of the Liberal party but rather what Dr. Gilbert Murray calls "liberality."¹ This quality may be cultivated, but it is not a natural manifestation of democratic life as a whole, for it is the possession of the few, of the spiritually "*hochwertig*," or aristocratic, though an adequate system of education, directed towards the attainment of a true democracy, would do a great deal towards creating the kind of soil in which it would grow. Education in the principles and aims of community is one of the greatest needs of the time; but British democracy at present provides no such conception of community.

There is little doubt, however, that national communities educated according to liberal-democratic principles would, in close co-operation with one another, provide the atmosphere in which a world movement based upon liberty, tolerance and responsibility would flourish. The production of such an association of "open" societies should be one of the tasks of political education, and it should be no more difficult of achievement by the pursuit of such a method than the "closed" societies of the present time.²

The present conflict is between societies which are closed and those which are in a greater degree open; or alternatively the conflict is for the realization of an open society; and it is of critical importance for the future which of these two types prevails. To put it in another way: it is of critical importance that the kind of community which survives should be related, even if not closely or immediately, to an ethical view of human societies rooted, ultimately, in recognizably Christian values. Nationalism, which is the most evident symptom of the closed type of society, need not be what it is now if it can be canalized so as to represent the contribution of the nation-state to the totality of the riches of the combined cultures of the world. It is not in itself incompatible with the existence of a truly international community; in fact, such a community would be drab and uniform without it.

In words which deserve to be far more widely known than they are, Stresemann, in the speech which he delivered on September 10, 1926, when

¹ Gilbert Murray, *Liberality and Civilization*, 1938.

² The distinction is Bergson's. See *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, E. tr., 229 ff.

Germany became a member of the League of Nations, finely indicated how a member of a nation-state can contribute to that wider open society which we are considering:

"I am of the opinion that no nation surrenders its own national life by becoming a member of the League of Nations. The Divine Architect of the earth did not create mankind as a uniform whole. He gave to the peoples different strains of blood; he gave them language as the sacred possession of their souls; he gave them countries of various kinds. But it cannot be the meaning of a divinely ordered world that men should turn their highest national achievements against each other and continually impede the general progress of culture. The man who serves humanity best is he who, deeply rooted in his own nation, develops his spiritual and mental endowments to their highest capacity, so that, growing beyond the limits of his own nation, he is able to give something to the whole of humanity, as the great ones of all nations have done. . . . Thus nation and humanity join together in the realm of the spirit, and they may also join together in political endeavour, if the will is present to serve the whole development."

Stresemann represented an outlook which, in spite of his own German nationalism (later revealed in his posthumously published *Testament*) was unfortunately not bequeathed to his successors, who became the apostles of the closed state. The ethical condemnation of the modern political situation is directed precisely towards this "closed" conception of nations in relation to each other and of classes within the state. Whether power is an essential element in all political action or outlook or not, it is the demonic element of power which has played so great a part in the behaviour of modern states, and which has done so much to prevent the realization of the ideal of the open society. Economic nationalism is another characteristic of the mood of modern states, and this, too, is to be condemned for moral reasons, as is all that militates against the idea of the essential harmony of interests which should bring nations together, instead of the theory of the conflict of interests which separates them. The defeat of the tragic aspect of history will begin when the prejudices and limitations of nationalism are overcome, and the single nation is regarded as an organically necessary member of the world-community; so that "there should be no schism in the body, but that all the members should have the same care for one another." (I Corinthians xii, 25.)

There is little indication that such a spirit is growing on any considerable scale. In every nation there is a conflict between self-interest and collaboration, fear and faith. The ideal of the Church as conceived by St. Paul is one which has often been applied to society (on the secular level), but, it would appear, without the realization that only when secular society becomes a "church" can this organic conception of life be emptied of the enmity which it so often shows towards another society. A national and international outlook based on an "open" morality is the only guarantee (if there can be such a guarantee at all) of an order in which parochialism can be overcome. The missionary enterprise of the Christian, chiefly the Protestant, churches has created a world-wide fellowship which is of the profoundest historical significance, of which the Madras Conference of December, 1938, and the various international Christian conferences of recent years are outstanding examples. An open international community is essentially a Christian community; and it does not mean the mingling of races, the remote ideal of world-government, or the weakening of national traditions and the adoption of a universal language. Mankind is far too varied to be forced into a common, undifferentiated uniformity. An open world-community can be achieved by the enlightened

collaboration of societies which are infused with the spirit of goodwill and of liberality.

This is not an idle vision, incapable of realization. It is the only hope man has of ending the tragic process which history has been up to the present. Men must set themselves ends which they deem to be desirable and strive to attain them, and the highest end in the realm of politics is the collaboration of democratic states in the process of constructing a world order based upon freedom, responsibility, and a creative morality which can liberate the human soul from the oppression of the things which disintegrate and destroy instead of contributing to development, harmony, and abundant life.

CHAPTER II

UTOPIANISM AND POLITICS

I

IN these pages the conviction is expressed that fundamentally political questions can be settled only through the recovery of the essential nature of democracy: that is, through the application of spiritual standards to the aims, technique, and spirit of politics. From the standpoint of religious faith this conviction is perhaps an obvious one; it is doubtful if anyone, even a non-Christian, who believes in the universality of ethical notions as a fundamental presupposition of the advance from force to persuasion, from anarchy to order, would prefer "unethical" politics to politics impregnated with the idea of the common good. Yet the connection between politics and ethics is by no means clear to many, and some have even held that they are irrelevant to each other. The conception, say, of a world living in a state of harmony, or the projection of a social order conceived as a Christian co-operative commonwealth, or the endeavour to substitute for predatory power-politics a scheme of Christian ethics collectively applied, it is held, is doomed to be thwarted because the very essence of politics is power, and any endeavour to see in it anything else is misguided utopianism. What is desirable is not necessarily realizable; in fact, the ethically desirable applied to politics may not be at all realizable because of the nature of politics. In this chapter, therefore, we will examine some of the alleged limitations of politics and ethics and some further points of contact between them.

Let us first examine one or two statements which have had as their aim the moralization, or even Christianization of politics, the consideration of which may lead to some provisional, though not necessarily final, conclusion.

Firstly: it is always easy to frame some kind of a declaration that the foundations of any political system shall be Christian, while, taking into consideration the circumstances in which it was formulated, there is little or no likelihood of its application to the system which is in need of reform. The most notorious instance of this in modern history is the Holy Alliance, the terms

of which were couched in a language pious to the point of absurdity. The text of this document is as follows:

IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY AND UNDIVIDED TRINITY

Their Majesties the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, in consequence of the great events which have occurred in Europe in the course of the last three years, and especially in consequence of the benefits which a divine Providence has been pleased to confer on those states whose governments have placed their confidence and hope solely in it, having become profoundly convinced that it is necessary to base the principles of conduct to be adopted by the Powers in their mutual relations on the sublime truths contained in the eternal religion of Christ our Saviour; declare solemnly that the present act has for its sole object to manifest, in the face of the universe, their unalterable determination to adopt as their rule of conduct, whether in the administration of their respective states or in their political relations with all other governments, no other principles than those of their holy religion, precepts of justice, of charity and of peace, which, far from being exclusively applicable to private life, ought, on the contrary, directly to influence the resolutions of princes and guide all their decisions, as offering the only means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections.

In consequence their Majesties have adopted the following articles:

- (i) In accordance with the words of Holy Scripture, which command all men to regard each other as brothers, the three contracting monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble brotherhood, and, regarding each other as compatriots, they will lend one another aid and succour in all places, and under all circumstances; believing themselves to be placed towards their subjects and their armies in the position of a father towards his children, they will direct them in a similar spirit of brotherhood, for the protection of religion, peace, and justice.
- (ii) As a result, the only principle in operation, either between the said governments or between their subjects will be that of rendering reciprocal service; to display to one another, by an inalterable goodwill, the mutual affection with which each should be animated; to regard one another without exception as members of one and the same Christian nationality; the three allied princes only considering themselves as delegated by Providence to govern three branches of one and the same family, namely: Austria, Prussia, Russia; thus confessing that the Christian nation of which they and their people form a part has really no other sovereign than Him to whom alone supreme power belongs, because in Him alone are contained all the treasures of love, knowledge, and of infinite wisdom, that is to say in God, our divine Saviour Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word.
- (iii) Their Majesties consequently recommend to their people with the most earnest solicitude, as being the only means of enjoying that peace that is born of a good conscience, and which alone is lasting, daily to fortify themselves more and more in the principles and practice of those duties which our divine Saviour imposed upon mankind.
- (iii) All the Powers that may wish solemnly to avow the sacred principles by which this act is inspired, and that recognize how important it is to the happiness of nations so long distracted that in future these truths should exercise their due influence over the destinies of man, will be received with much ardour and affection into this Holy Alliance.

Signed in Paris in the year of grace 1815 the 14th September.

(Signed) François
Frédéric-Guillaume
Alexandre.

While this strange document was greeted with some amusement by the Foreign Offices of Europe (Metternich believed that Alexander was quite mad and Castlereagh called it a "piece of sublime mysticism"), it is questionable whether anyone concerned about the christianization of politics would consider such a declaration, if possible of execution, undesirable. Actually, of course, it became an instrument of reactionary tyranny; and though it cannot be taken seriously its sentiments are quite commendable; but it shows how dangerous it is to associate high-sounding principles with politics. For if

there is no likelihood of their being empirically expressed, especially if the characters of their sponsors are not above criticism, they drag into disrepute the religion from which they are drawn. The truth is that the enunciation of such principles is usually greeted with distrust or derision, for the average man, as well as the statesman, thinking that he perceives some ulterior motive behind them, suspects them of being a cloak for hypocrisy, knowing quite well that the possibility of their practical expression is too remote to be seriously considered. Politics are affected not by pious declarations but by men who often represent the conflicting interests of nations, and whatever may be the personal views of the former, assuming that they are sincere in holding them, there is little evidence that, up to the present time, they have exercised much influence upon the course of inter-state relationships. During the Second World War we were told that we were fighting for a "Christian civilization"; but before the outbreak of the war appeals by politicians to the tax-payer to pay higher taxes in order to make a "Christian civilization" more tangible were not much in evidence. Besides, the war was not being fought to preserve Christian civilization, for there is no such civilization. Western society is largely secular, not Christian, though there are Christian influences operating in it. Neither by public declaration, political behaviour, nor by private profession, can any great Western nation be said to be "Christian."

Secondly: few political parties have ventured to appeal to their constituents on Christian grounds, even in nominally Christian states. In England this has not happened, presumably because no political party claims more than any other to have a Christian foundation; and even if it were to do so, Christians supporting the other parties would resent the monopolizing of "Christian" motives by any other group of people. Such terms as "Christian Socialist," as understood in post-war Austria, meant little more than "non-Jewish" or "non-Marxist." In Republican Germany at least three parties claimed to have some connection with Christianity, perhaps in order to obtain the votes of the Church-going middle-classes: the Central Party, which was the organ of Roman Catholic opinion; the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei*; and, curiously enough, the National Socialist Party. The first, in the official programme of its aims published in 1922, claimed to find the restoration and future of the German people in a "clearly defined Christian-national policy," and its domestic policy would be conditioned by the "Christian conception of the state," though no guidance was given as to the character of the Christian state. Similarly, the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* maintained that "only in a living Christianity can our people find the up-building and supporting power which is required in state, school, and home."¹ The National Socialist Party, as is now well known, advocated, with calculated vagueness, a "positive Christianity," though none of its leaders had any interest in any form of Christianity.

It will be noticed that not one of these parties commits itself to defining what is a Christian state: perhaps it is little more than a state in which the Christian Church is given official recognition by the state; though no doubt the Catholic Centre Party would have quite a different conception of it from the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei*. In no case is any indication given of how

¹ Mommsen and Franz, *Deutsche Parteiprogramme*, Berlin, 1931.

the Christian form of state is to be achieved, nor, when achieved, how it is to be maintained. In each of these party programmes Christianity is mentioned within the context of national regeneration, more as an instrument than as an end in itself or even as an essential constituent. In any case, a political party cannot impose a "Christian" conception of life upon its citizens, though it may to some extent take it for granted; whereas it can by means of the power at its disposal oblige them to accept its political aims. The most effective instances of the relation between religion and politics are those in which states have declared themselves to be anti-religious or anti-clerical, repudiating any religious foundation or association with religion, such as Russia, Mexico, and modern Turkey, where it has been far easier to build a state on a non-religious basis than it has for the so-called Christian countries to form "Christian" states, by which is meant the application of Christian ethics to the collective life and institutions of a people. The picture, further, of several parties whose political principles differ fundamentally including in their manifestos phrases such as "standing for the Christian conception of life" or "based upon the Christian form of state" is one which has its pathetic as well as a controversial aspect, for it suggests that there is a lack of agreement on the important question of what is the nature of a Christian society, and that Christians do not know what they are advocating.

Another approach to the question of the association of any particular form of religion with politics is indicated by Sir Alfred Zimmern in his book *Spiritual Values and International Affairs*, in which he questions whether the influence of the churches on foreign policy during the last twenty years or so has been good, as politics require a special technique and a detailed knowledge which is beyond the grasp of those who, in the name of "Christian internationalism," utter pronouncements and pass resolutions on public and international affairs. More is required, he says, than goodwill and fine aspirations, for these can often blind one to the nature of political realities; and in any case, international affairs are outside the jurisdiction of ordinary citizens, and are characterized by what Prof. Zimmern calls "simultaneity"; that is, they are to be understood not as isolated incidents requiring comment, but as matters which can only be appreciated in relation to the world-situation of which only experts are competent to pass judgment. Prof. Zimmern cites several instances of misguided judgments pronounced by well-meaning people in the name of "Christian ethics" which should have been withheld in view of the limited information accessible at the time. Moral indignation, again, though commendable as an attitude, is impotent and irrelevant, for its effectiveness is limited by definite political realities. Prof. Zimmern regrets that the League of Nations, which was a purely political mechanism, in the operation of which people of many religions or of no religion at all participated, came to be sponsored with such enthusiasm by devout church people who hailed it as a kind of political Kingdom of God and attributed to it an almost sacramental sanctity which it was never intended to possess.¹ Considerations such as these, he holds, are strengthened by the oecumenical nature of the Church, by which

¹ In fairness to the Churches, however, it should be said that this enthusiasm was encouraged by the proceedings and mood of the Annual Assembly of the League, of which M. André Maurois has written with witty irony. See *A Private Universe*, p. 194-5.

is meant that its very world-wide character should prevent Christians in one country from protesting, as Christians, against the political behaviour of another country if they disapprove of it. An example of this (though it is not mentioned by Prof. Zimmern) was the desire of Japanese and Chinese Christians and British missionaries working in China that Christians in the West should refrain from passing resolutions expressing disapproval of Japanese aggression in China because of the embarrassment caused to those Christians and the likelihood of the Japanese victimizing any Christians who happened to be on the spot. Further, the League of Nations and its Christian supporters have advocated what has been chiefly a "British" policy, which has taken little note of the situations and moods of foreign powers who see things quite in a different light. Christians should therefore be careful not to adopt a definite position as long as they are not sure of *all* the known factors which must be taken into consideration in the forming of a political judgment. In making the League of Nations an object almost of faith, the Churches ascribed a religious dignity to what is, or ought to be, simply a piece of political machinery. In any case, religion can do no more than supply the dynamic for political action or reform: it cannot carry out any reform without Cæsar's technique. Further, Prof. Zimmern holds, when power-politics are denounced in the name of Christian ethics, those who do the denouncing are in danger of forgetting that there can be no politics without power.¹ The distinction should be not between power-politics and politics without power but between the right and the wrong use of power. Again, in any secular society there is bound to be tension between "God" and "Cæsar," for such tension is primary, permanent, difficult of solution, and inseparable from the relation between religion and politics. The Christian can be most useful, Prof. Zimmern believes, in acting as a purifying leaven, not in passing judgments on political situations and identifying certain political programmes or machinery with the Kingdom of God. He rejects, however, the view that the Christian must effect a clean-cut division between himself and the world, or refuse to bring his ethical principles to bear upon politics, for this would mean a withdrawal from the world, which in a modern society is impossible; and he also regrets the distinction made so frequently in Lutheran theology between the political and the moral as two things which operate in two quite different spheres.

A further line of approach to the question is suggested by the "realist" type of political thought, exemplified in Professor E. H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*, and in the writings of Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr, to which Prof. Carr would appear to be in some measure indebted. The introduction of utopianism (that is, idealism) into the political scene, he says, is doomed to failure, and is even pernicious, because the political spirit is essentially that in which "realism" dominates. Utopianism, by which Prof. Carr seems to mean the indication of what political morality should be compared with what it "really" is, is irrelevant to politics because the essence of politics is power, and political changes are brought about by its application, not by the appeal to reason or morality. The average man, interested in international affairs, would no doubt regard the "Locarno spirit" as being characterized by reason and by the more genial spirit of conciliation and co-operation. But

¹ Op. cit. p. 40.

Prof. Carr denies this; for, he says, when Germany feared France in 1922 a treaty of guarantee was rejected by France; whereas by 1926 the position had changed, and France welcomed the Treaties because she was afraid of a recovering Germany; and when Germany was strong enough she repudiated the Locarno agreements. The Locarno Treaty then, in so far as it affected Germany and France was little more than the reflection of the balance of power between the years 1922 and 1936.¹ This theory, plausible as it may seem, ignores, however, the fact that in 1922 France was in no mood to accept such a treaty of guarantee, being dominated by Poincaré, whereas four years later the chief influence in French foreign policy was Briand, who had other views about a European system; and that France had nothing to fear from Germany at the time of the signature of the Locarno Treaties as the latter was still paying reparations unrevised by the Young Plan and was limited to the possession of the Reichswehr of a hundred thousand men; and that Nazi Germany has made it her policy to break or repudiate every treaty. Still, the instance is typical of the emphasis which Prof. Carr lays on the worth of the intrusion into politics of anything which is not mainly characterized by power.

He begins by dealing with the breakdown of political "utopianism" between 1919 and 1939, due to the ignoring by the "utopians" of the real nature of politics, quoting, apparently with approval, Engels' dictum that "without force and iron ruthlessness nothing is achieved in history." The utopian school (if such a school exists) has thought about international affairs as though their direction could be determined by anything but considerations of force.

"The monopoly of international studies in the post-war period by the Utopian school has resulted in a concentration of interest in discussions of the question what international morality ought ideally to be. There has been little discussion of the moral behaviour of states except to pass hasty and sweeping condemnation of it in the light of this ideal morality."²

No reference is made in such condemnation to the moral assumption of the "ordinary man;" it proceeds from the high, abstract morality of the political idealist. By the utopian school Prof. Carr presumably means the advocates of the League of Nations, of Collective Security, Viscount Cecil, President Wilson, and all who might be dissatisfied with the reduction of politics to the domination of brute force. He would no doubt include in addition those who believe in the peaceful settlement of international disputes, the International Court of Justice, and other institutions and principles which find in the outlook of Machiavelli, Bismarck, and Hitler (to name only the most conspicuous of its exponents) that "realistic" approach which excluded morality from politics. But Prof. Carr does not stop here: he denounces the upholders of international morality as hypocrites. What matters, he says, is not that Wilson, Briand, and Eden failed to induce their fellow countrymen to apply the principles in which they appeared to believe, but that these supposedly absolute and universal principles are simply the reflection of national interests at any given time.

"As soon as the attempt is made to apply these supposedly abstract principles to a concrete political situation, they are revealed as the transparent disguises of selfish vested interests."³

¹ *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Macmillan, p. 135. See also the same writer's *The Conditions of Peace*.

² *Ibid.*, p. 182.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Such politicians, who believe, or profess to believe, in the association of international morality with security, may possibly bear a large share of the responsibility for the disaster which has overwhelmed Europe.¹ This suggests to Prof. Carr the possibility that the breakdown of post-war utopianism may be due to the fact that the fundamental basis of utopianism is wrong: that is, it may

turn out to be untrue that, if men reason rightly about international politics they will act rightly, or that right reasoning about one's nation's interests is the road to an international paradise. Perhaps the very principle the application of which is considered as promising better relationships between nations is false and inapplicable.²

Thus Prof. Carr's distrust of the application of moral principles to politics goes deeper than the question of whether such principles can, at a certain time, be applied; he doubts whether they should be applied at all. This, it will easily be seen, leads to complete cynicism about the motives behind any kind of political idealism in politics, and to scepticism as to whether international relations can ever be better than they are at present.

Prof. Carr then proceeds to examine the applicability of personal morality to collective behaviour. The utopians make the mistake of applying to the relations between states notions of right and wrong which may be relevant to individuals in their relations with each other but irrelevant to collectives. The nature of international affairs is such that

acts with which international morality is concerned are performed by individuals not on their own behalf but on behalf of those fictitious group-persons "Great Britain" and "Italy"; and the morality in question is the morality attributed to those "persons."

Their actions on behalf of such state-groups must therefore not be judged in terms of strictly personal morality; and states are not expected to observe the same standards as the individual because moral impulses are to be traced to individuals and not to groups, and a group is not "expected" to behave altruistically in violation of its own interests.³ Self-interest is therefore inevitable; every nation will act from motives of self-interest, whereas an individual person might not. Further, it is not possible to impute guilt or sin to a collective body, as for example a bank or a joint-stock company, or a state, as it is to an individual; the state is therefore beyond the reach of moral categories. It is also beyond the imposition of morality, for no means have been devised which will effectively compel it to observe principles considered to be ethical. National "morality" is something applied to fictitious entities which they are by their very nature unable to experience; for as they cannot feel any intimate emotions there can for them be no formal kind of morality.

Thirdly, Prof. Carr contends that the use of power, being of the essential nature of politics, its *ultima ratio*, cannot be subordinated to considerations of morality. "Whatever moral issues may be involved in the struggle, there is an issue of power which cannot be expressed in terms of morality."⁴ It is unprofitable to ask why nations seek to dominate: they just do so, if they

¹ Ibid., p. 289.

² Ibid., p. 53.

³ Ibid., p. 201.

⁴ Ibid., p. 301.

are powerful enough, and the reality of inter-state conflict must be realized. The very fact of such conflict constitutes the denial of the "harmony of interests" which is thought should exist between states; for what nation A considers should be a harmony of interests may not be so considered by nation B. Britain and France, it is assumed, believed in collective security; but Germany and Italy did not, for such "security" was designed to prevent them from realizing what they judged to be legitimate aims of foreign policy; nor did Japan; in fact, "collective security," as long as some powers remained "unsatisfied," was an obstacle and an enemy. Prof. Carr would doubtless argue that as long as powers consider themselves to be "unsatisfied" it is useless to talk about harmony of interests: each state is justified in believing itself to be the judge in its own cause, for reference to any standard of morality outside itself, that is, "ideal" morality, is a victory for utopianism, and utopianism is incapable, because of what it is, of succeeding.

It is important to bear in mind Prof. Carr's contention concerning harmony of interests, for it is equivalent to asserting that if a state chooses to deny it, no such harmony exists. In spite of the repudiation by certain states of the principle of collective security, or of the indifference of others to it, it is becoming clearer than ever that security can be achieved only within some kind of collective or unitary European framework, in which "utopian" morality is maintained, if necessary by force. This applies no less to international than to internal affairs. The refusal of one government to acknowledge the existence of a harmony of interests does not prove that such harmony is non-existent, though in so doing it may be even acting in a manner contrary to its own interest, and the interests of European society.

The obsession which has vitiated European politics for a generation has been the notion that some nations gain and others lose by the "utopian" principle of collective security; that is, by a joint agreement, supported by the potential use of force, that war is wrong and not simply inconvenient. The Germans, because of their peculiar mentality, have refused to see this. Stresemann, unless he was acting with extreme duplicity, showed evidence of belief in European co-operation, that is, in the existence of some harmony of interests; the National Socialists did not believe this, though their refusal to do so proves, not that such harmony is non-existent, but that they are bad Europeans. Law-breakers will always deny that a harmony of interests exists as between them and the rest of the community; but generally speaking the rest of the citizens find their security in the acknowledgement that it is best promoted by the admission that there is such a harmony. If carried to its logical conclusion, Prof. Carr's argument means that, if there is no such thing as a harmony of interests, such an idea must necessarily belong to the utopian realm, and we must be contented indefinitely with the settlement of international disputes by force, and must not trouble our heads with such things as bad faith, the breaking of treaties, and the practice of aggression, for these are to be expected, being elements in the pursuit of "realistic" political aims. Yet in the later part of his book he outlines ways in which international conflict might be abolished: a curious inconsistency, for that is precisely what the "utopians," in their misguided enthusiasm, have been doing for the last twenty years.

Briefly, Prof. Carr's thesis can be summarized as follows. Utopianism, the application of idealism to politics, is pernicious and destined to fail because it ignores the "realistic" nature of politics. Nations always have been and always will be guided by self-interest and self-interest alone. If those who speak on their behalf advocate high ethical principles, these are but a sinister and hypocritical cloak with which to conceal some ulterior motive. The attempt to abstract "power" from politics is equally pernicious, for the basis and ultimate appeal of all politics is force. Prof. Carr's book is a masterly defence of traditional political methods as practised up to the year 1940, and an equally enthusiastic rejection of any attempt, in the name of morality, to change them.

But is the distinction, or divorce, between ethical idealism (or political idealism) and what is politically possible as complete as Prof. Carr would have us believe? Actually he is playing into the hands of the advocates of ruthless *Realpolitik*, no matter to what nation they may belong. He does not give us much hope of peace or of the re-organization of society on a juster basis. The facts, of course, are not encouraging. The decision of many nations to outlaw war by signing the Kellogg Pact in 1928; the resort of states to war in spite of their most solemn professions of loyalty to the Covenant of the League, are not facts which encourage us to believe that nations will respect their voluntarily assumed obligations unless force is applied, as a last resort, before they become too strong, by other nations which do believe in order. Yet there are many instances of nations accepting the legal instead of the extra-legal method of settling their disputes with one another, though not in major crises, because since 1920 aggressor nations have made demands the illegality of which would be condemned by an international court and would therefore not admit of arbitration. There could have been no arbitration about the "incidents" which led to the invasions of China and Abyssinia or Austria.

In such cases there was no more to arbitrate about than the predatory acts of a burglar. These acts were definitely "wrong," if judged by objective moral standards (or by people who stand neither to lose nor to gain by their condemnation), and should therefore be considered from the standpoint of moral disapproval. Mere condemnation, as a gesture and nothing more, can achieve little; but supported by a concern for morality and for moral qualities such as freedom and justice, and ultimately by force, if necessary, it should not be thought that the redress of a situation patently unjust, followed by a reconstruction of society after a period of great dislocation, should be outside the realm of practical possibility. "A world in conflict" belongs to "reality"; "a world at peace" belongs to "Utopia." Yet surely none but an imbecile or a complete cynic would doubt that the advance from the former in the direction of the latter is more than remotely possible. The appeal to self-interest may, at the moment, be the strongest form of appeal; but ultimately it is doomed to bankruptcy because it is in opposition to the law of life. There is no reason why "reality" should be thought of in terms of conflict, for as a fact it is no more "real" than conciliation or co-operation. The Marxist economic analysis of society, based upon the observation of conditions in 1840, held that there could be no harmony of interests between capital and labour, a belief which many still hold; but the history of economic readjustments

shows that whatever disharmony exists between the two can be considerably lessened by negotiation and agreement; and in the last analysis an economic system can be evolved in which conflict can be transcended or eliminated by the change from one system to a different one.

As a further comment upon the point of view advanced by Prof. Carr a few words might be added on the subject of the technique of conducting foreign affairs in relation to ethical principles. Politics, as Prof. Zimmern has rightly insisted, have their own technique, just as any other human activity has, for they are a legitimate activity, universal, and different from moral philosophy or theology just as these latter are different from art or science or any other branches of mental activity which men pursue. But politics, the affairs of a state, are not pursued by an abstract "thing" called the state, from which all human elements have been removed. Those who are responsible for the conduct of affairs are moral beings and are therefore capable (whether they do or do not is beside the point) of acting morally.

The modern political philosopher or writer on international affairs writes about the "state;" but Machiavelli, four hundred odd years ago, wrote about the "prince," for it was he who represented the executive and the city-state itself; and as political behaviour is the behaviour not of a machine but of moral (or immoral) individuals it may be of some assistance if the "state" is rather more personalized so that the relevance of ethics to politics, or the division between the two, may be more clearly grasped. It should be added, however, that the diplomatic methods of the "prince" are not those of a democracy but of an autocrat, and in this they resemble the political behaviour of the modern autocratic heads of states.¹

The precepts which the "realist" Italian recommends, reluctantly, it would seem, were it not for the weaknesses of human nature which he is obliged to take into consideration, are by no means obsolete at the present time; for in more lands than one those who guide their nation's policy have made a system of this foxiness. Yet, having to advocate this kind of diplomacy because the character of men makes it inevitable, Machiavelli does not appear to recommend amorality or immorality in politics for its own sake; rather is it a weapon with which to counter others who are playing the same game. He regrets that such a method is necessary, but as long as it is, it must be operated seriously and exploited to the fullest possible extent. "Machiavellianism" has become part of the accepted technique employed in the conduct of

¹ "Everyone admits how praiseworthy it is in a prince to keep faith," wrote Machiavelli, "and to live with integrity and not with craft. Nevertheless our experience has been that those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word. You must know that there are two ways of contesting, the one by law, the other by force; the first method is proper to men, the second to beasts; but because the first is frequently not sufficient, it is necessary to have recourse to the second. . . . Therefore a wise lord cannot, nor ought he to, keep faith when such observance may be turned against him, and when the reasons that cause him to pledge it exist no longer. If men were entirely good this precept would not hold, but because they are bad, and will not keep faith with you, you too are not bound to observe it with them. Nor will there ever be wanting to a prince legitimate reasons to excuse this non-observance. Of this endless modern examples could be given, showing how many treaties and engagements have been made void and of no effect through the faithlessness of princes; and he who has known best how to employ the fox has succeeded best." *The Prince*, ch. XVIII: "Concerning the way in which Princes should keep faith."

international affairs, more so by some powers than others, and chiefly, in modern times, by the Germans, of whom Bismarck, Holstein, Bülow and Hitler have been the most accomplished exponents, and by their Japanese disciples: a form of diplomatic practice from which all ethics are rigorously excluded. It succeeds for a time, but in the long run it inspires such complete mistrust and loathing that it defeats its own purposes. Generally speaking, foxiness and extreme unreliability do not make for happy relations between individuals or between nations: they only serve to increase tension and distrust and eventually the moral isolation of those who practise them. It is true that most statesmen act upon the assumption that their main task is to further their nation's interests, if not by fair means, then by foul; and no doubt this attitude of mind will exist as long as current notions of sovereignty remain unrevised; but all do not have recourse to ignoble methods in the pursuit of their aims, nor are all national aims invariably undistinguishable from the pursuit of one's own interests. In fact, it would appear that dishonest ethics do not tend to produce the best diplomatists. In describing the qualities which the ideal diplomatist should possess, and which many, it is hoped, do possess, Mr. Harold Nicolson¹ puts truthfulness at the head of the list, thus recommending an embodiment of a moral virtue in the process of negotiation which Machiavelli's "realistic" Prince and the exponents of the Wilhelmstrasse's foreign policy might be inclined to regard as curious. Little imagination is required to see what would be the condition of inter-state relationships if unrestrained cunning were to be regarded as the main constituent of diplomatic technique. During earlier historical periods, when there was little conscience exhibited in politics, and the process of national consolidation was incomplete, what are now considered to be inferior moral standards were no doubt universally commended for the same reason that Machiavelli recommended them. The view of seventeenth century Sir Henry Wotton that "an ambassador is an honest man who is sent to lie abroad for the good of his country" may or may not have been seriously meant, but that it contained much truth cannot be denied, even if as a precept it was incompatible with its author's own high notions of morality.

The morality of any system depends clearly upon the moral ideas of those who are responsible for its operation, and as these are not abstractions but individuals the extent to which ethical principles are applicable to state- and inter-state relationships is reducible to the integrity or otherwise of the executive. Frederick II's breach of faith with Maria Theresa, Bismarck's much-lauded falsification of the Ems telegram, and other and more modern examples of diplomatic cunning, appear to have been indispensable factors in a technique which did not welcome the introduction of the notion of integrity and honesty into political relationships, but which must be considered obsolescent in view of the fact that those who now conduct their affairs in accordance with them are the object of universal loathing and contempt. The reason for this may be thought to be nothing more than expediency or a dislike of them because the consequences to individuals are disastrous; but to assume that this is the only explanation is to take a cynical view of

¹ H. Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, pp. 48 ff.

politics which admits of no possible improvement in the relations of states with each other. The technique of diplomacy, no less than the aims and methods of foreign policy, is not to be divorced from considerations of right and wrong, even when judged from the purely empirical standpoint of what, in the long run, pays best.

We do know, however, that, up to the present time, neither fear, morality, nor appeal to reason has succeeded in inducing nations to depart from policies which are likely to lead to catastrophe. One would have thought, for example, that fear of the repetition of the First World War would have been sufficient to drive nations to an unqualified support of the principle of collective security; that nations with some Christian tradition behind them would have seen in fevered economic nationalism an offence against Christian morality; that the settlement of international disputes by rational methods, by the appeal to arbitration, would be preferable to a violent solution. But the history of the last twenty years has disillusioned any who might have hoped for these things. Fear is felt by the weak, not by the strong, until the strong realize that others are stronger than they and have the power to inspire fear—a lesson learned usually after much suffering; for the strong state believes that by the practice of cunning and the infliction of threats it is able to intimidate the weak or those whom it imagines to be weak. Many smaller nations were torn by two fears: fear of aggression on the one hand, and fear on the other of having their neutrality compromised by committing themselves to the principle of collective security or defensive alliances. They were, it is true, not encouraged by the lack of confidence shown by the larger nations in this principle but they are nevertheless a tragic instance of the consequences of this divided fear. And whereas Germany might have feared an overwhelming collective coalition to prevent war, she had no fear of a divided Europe rendered ineffective by fear of war. The events of the last few years have shown that when the fear of "war in general" takes precedence over fear of "a war in particular," the way lies open for any strong nation to force a war upon an unwilling majority, and the result is a general war.

Again, the appeal to morality has had no more success than the appeal to fear, the reason being that nations do not, as a whole, act from reasons of morality but of self-interest. There are, of course, exceptions. Hermann Kantorowicz, formerly professor of law at Kiel until his dismissal by the Nazis, in one of the most sympathetic analyses of British foreign policy undertaken by a foreigner, was of the opinion that the British are the most humane European nation, and that their humanitarianism, one form of which is expressed in pacifism and enlightened internationalism, is sincere, and represents a genuine endeavour to introduce moral values into its political outlook, and that even during the ascendancy of Palmerston British foreign policy was not devoid of it.¹ Prof. Wilhelm Dibelius, another keen observer of British life and history, has expressed views on British policy which are refreshingly appreciative coming from another German.

The fact remains that Britain is the solitary great power which has never injured the vital interest of another European people by annexation, and it is a fact of immeasurable moral effect in a period dominated by the principle of nationality.

¹ H. Kantorowicz, *The Spirit of British Policy*, E. Tr., Allen and Unwin, 1931, p. 190, *passim*.

Not that Britain is always guided by altruistic motives: far from it; but she is, nevertheless, the

"single country in the world which looking after its own interests with meticulous care, has something to give to others; the single country where patriotism does not represent a threat or a challenge to the rest of the world; the single country which invariably summons the most progressive, idealistic and efficient forces in other nations to co-operate with it."¹

She is also the only power which, while egotistic through and through, can give to the world order, progress, and peace, a conclusion which would doubtless be challenged by other Germans, by some cynics, some pacifists, extremists of various sorts, and Prof. Carr. There are some who see in the decision to abolish slavery a concession to the economic conditions of the time, to give to S. Africa self-government homage paid to expediency, and the campaign against the Belgian Congo atrocities a hypocritical cloak covering what can, by probing, be revealed to be thoroughgoing self-interest, and in Gladstone's confession that "politics would be an utter blank to me were I to make the discovery that we were mistaken in maintaining their association with religion" a piece of self-righteous humbug.

Though it seems to be the fashion in some circles to be sceptical and cynical about the profession of moral intentions in politics, it is true that national egotism is a greater power in politics than morality, perhaps because egotism is such a natural principle of human behaviour that any action which does not arise from it immediately provokes suspicion, which is not, on the whole, surprising.

The appeal to reason has had as little success as the appeal to morality, though here, again, there are exceptions. During the greater part of the nineteenth century the Peace Society and its untiring secretary Henry Richard, Member of Parliament for Merthyr Tydvil, were engaged in a European campaign on behalf of arbitration, which may be described as the application of reason to the settlement of international disputes. Although many instances of the exercise of arbitration during the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries can be adduced, this method did not commend itself to the great European nations, where matters of "national interest" were involved, the decision of the British Government to submit the dispute about the *Alabama* to a court of neutrals being the most famous. The appeal to reason, however, is based upon the assumption that men are naturally capable of obeying the good and the rational when it is pointed out to them and are willing to acknowledge the binding nature of the law of nature; whereas in actual practice they do nothing of the kind, which is not equivalent to saying that they never will. Most people do not allow themselves to be ruled by reason, for the appeal of emotional propaganda is far more powerful; nor do they easily perceive the necessity of applying to international disputes the methods of settling disputes which are used in their civil relationships. Here again power is an important consideration. While she was weak Germany was willing to submit the matter of the projected Austro-German Customs Union to the Hague Court and to abide by the adverse decision given (which was conditioned largely by the self-interest of certain powers); but not many years later she had no scruples about effecting a complete political union by force. "Peace"

¹ W. Dibelius, *England*, E. Tr., p. 103, Cape.

is by most people held to be desirable, but there is a disinclination to follow the "things which make for peace" if what is called "national honour" is involved. Such is the perverseness and incredible stupidity of human nature. The Socialist Convention at Brussels in the summer of 1914 had it in its power to call a general strike of European workers, which might have prevented the war; but nationalism was stronger than reason. The Ballplatz and the Wilhelmstrasse and the Russian Foreign Office desired war, and having insisted upon it, plunged Europe into blood. The curious thing is that man so often rejects the desirable and the rational, even when their consequences are preferable to a violent alternative which does not even guarantee that the aims of its sponsors will be realized. The "Utopian," however, has no reason to believe that reason will not sometime be given its true place in politics, for it occupies a comparatively recent place in the evolution of human life.

On the surface, then, it would seem that, in practice, politics has been accorded a virtual autonomy among other activities. Neither fear, morality, nor reason has succeeded in combating national egotism and the belief in the right to the unlimited exercise of power where the consequences of its exercise are not serious to those who advocate it. From this it has been concluded that politics as a whole is beyond morality, that "idealistic" morality, the morality of "what-ought-to-be", is irrelevant to the political behaviour of states. But it is the holders of this belief, when endowed with executive power, whose behaviour has brought politics as a whole to the bar of moral judgment. To the moralist its very amorality compels an examination of the nature of political morality, for the fact that nations do not behave as they "ought" suggests the question, how "ought" they to behave? An aggressor nation obeys, it is true, a kind of morality which it has itself created. If the notion of "ought" is at all applicable to politics ("a man or a government 'ought' or 'ought not' to do this or that"), we are obliged to consider the supposition that politics, even if considered by many not to be a function of ethics, has an ethical aspect; and if an ethical aspect, at the same time has some relation to the religious system, if any, in which a particular morality is grounded.

Let us, then, consider further this question of the opposition of "Utopianism" and "reality," the contrast of how things "ought" to be with their actual condition, from the standpoint of Christian philosophy.

CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND MORAL JUDGMENTS

I

A CHRISTIAN philosophy begins not with politics but with a conception of life, in which politics has a necessary place. Its foundation is belief in the sovereignty of God, who wills the good, desiring that human institutions shall conform, as far as possible, with the Good, which can be embodied in such an institution as the state. But as the state is a human order it exists

under the temptation to do evil, which can take many forms, such as oppression, neglect of education, the perpetuation of poverty, the promotion of a materialistic view of life, the perversion of youth for its own ends, the wielding of unrestricted power. These, it is true, may, from the standpoint of the state which practises them, be represented as good things, and the whole mechanism of the state may be applied to promote them. What is "good" or "right" may be interpreted as that which furthers the aims of the nation or class. But Christian theology condemns them because they are in opposition to the fundamental principle of the sovereignty of God, who desires not oppression but freedom, not poverty but a fair distribution of this world's goods; the spiritual, not the materialistic understanding of life; honesty, not cunning, and service instead of exploitation. Christian theology describes the world as it stands in relation to the sovereignty of God and judges it accordingly. Thus, in so far as the whole of life is the object of moral judgment, the state, too, must be examined as an object of such judgment. Aggression by a state is not to be condemned from the standpoint of that state if its behaviour is in accordance with its own particular morality based, say, on the absolute claim of *Volkstum*: but a state dominated by a Christian moral outlook would not act in such a manner for it would be acting in opposition to the dictates of its own code. A "Christian" nation may, however, perform actions which are non-Christian and maintain non-Christian institutions; but on its awakening to the ethical and political and social implications of its religion condemns and abolishes such institutions.

The abolition of slavery by the British Government is a case in point; for slavery is not only a form of injustice; it is a sin because it implies a wrong attitude towards one's fellow-man. Similarly, a Christian nation would regard a system which allows poverty to continue as sinful, and would be prepared to redeem the system from sin. War is an evil: it causes wastage of life and material, pain, anxiety, and hatred; but although it is an evil it is tolerated. From the Christian standpoint it is a sin; and though nations tolerate evils, really Christian nations would not tolerate sins. The depth of the abyss into which modern political systems have fallen is demonstrated by the Fascist and Nazi view that war is neither an evil nor a sin: it is one of the highest forms of good. It is against this complete "bolshhevization" of morality, this reversal of moral standards, as sponsored by the modern secular state, that Christianity, both as a religion and as an ethic, protests, subjecting the character and behaviour of that state to a searching examination. But the "realist" says that a protest is futile and that the striking of a moral attitude is irrelevant to the political scene, which is the product of what "is," not of what "ought" to be, and any attitude which ignores this is "Utopian" and therefore ignores the essential nature of politics. But politics is the study of the collective life of man and its organization, and because man is a moral being, the extension of his individual life to the collective scale must have its moral aspect. It is, therefore, as seen from the standpoint of Christian theology something capable of redemption; political behaviour is good or bad, right or wrong, not because it is or is not expedient or pragmatically defensible, but because it is seen to be good or bad, right or wrong, in relation to the sovereignty of God.

Now Christian theology is not concerned exclusively with the definition

of the nature and attributes of God; it deals also with the definition of the nature of man, and therefore with the systems man has created, of which the state is the most significant, and, in the modern world, the most potent agency for good or evil. It deals therefore with the factual, the empirical, the known, not with abstractions.

Lutheran theology, as has already been mentioned, has conferred upon the state an ethical value in respect of its chief function, namely, to protect the citizen from evil powers. The danger, however, inherent in this attitude lies in the temptation to justify all that the state does by regarding its undertakings, whatever they may be, as an extension of this function, so that it eyes them with approval but seldom with condemnation. Thus an aggressor state might be conceived as behaving "morally" when it secures *Lebensraum* for its own citizens, or when it expands in order to provide a protective fringe for its territory; whether such behaviour is thought of as morally right or wrong depends upon the moral notions prevalent at the time or upon the moral viewpoint of the approver or the condemner. But the "Utopian," the realist insists, is committing a serious error when he imagines that the behaviour of states towards one another can be conditioned by anything but self-interest, that is, by what Christian theology may consider to be opposed to the will of God and contrary to the deepest human interest. States have always behaved in that way, the "realist" says, and always will. That they have done so may be the legitimate conclusion of the historian; but that they always will do so no historian is justified in asserting. For if his judgment is true, the future progress of history will be dismal, and the state will never be anything better than a predatory organization for the practice of power-politics. Without being superficially optimistic (on the contrary, it claims to describe man exactly as he is) Christianity encourages the hope that, because God is Sovereign, nations will enter into reasonable relations with each other and will be driven by force of circumstances to realize that it is through the de-moralization of politics that the greatest disasters overwhelm society. Unless man acts in conformity with the principles which the Christian derives from the principle of divine sovereignty and which he believes to be the only ultimately valid standards according to which the rightness or wrongness of human behaviour can be judged, there is no alternative but abandonment to an orgy of destruction at more or less regular intervals. Even if for quite unreligious reasons, for example as a result of rational persuasion, man is able to realize the folly of what the Christian considers to be unmoral politics, it may be argued that the rule of reason, or of natural law, is one of the ways in which God, recognized or unrecognized, chooses to exert his sovereignty.

Sovereignty presupposes law. The Divine Sovereignty of which the Christian religion speaks is inconceivable without the rule of divine law. "Thy Kingdom come;" but naturally "Thy will be done" should come first; for without the doing of God's will, the practice of His law in our hearts, His sovereignty, in so far as it is something of which we can be aware, has no existence for us, for it is when we do God's will that His sovereignty, His Kingdom, is given actuality. A government can claim sovereignty; but unless there exists a mechanism for the imposition of law, an orderly system of

administration, and a willingness on the part of the citizens to obey the law, its sovereignty is purely theoretical.

Now the political, or one might say the world-historical, crises of the twentieth century are the result of a particular conception of sovereignty in its external and internal implications. The sovereign state recognizes no law, no right but its own and that which it is able to impose upon others. This has reached its culmination in the totalitarian or tyrannical conception of the state, which is, however, not necessarily to be identified with the notion of the state as *power*; for power cannot yet, and it is doubtful if it ever will, be dissociated from politics or from any other activity which has to deal with the collective life of man, at any rate as long as the balance between self and society has not been achieved. But power divorced from law and responsibility develops into the blind and unrestrained exercise of force for selfish ends, although those who use it may be able to evoke noble forms of response, such as service and self-sacrifice and the exhibition of heroic qualities, which they exploit for their own ends. Only by a limitation of sovereignty can there be a guarantee of the *restricted* exercise of power which is a precondition of the evolution of an international community based upon the concept of universally valid law. Hitherto international law does not possess this validity because there is no way of enforcing its observation: its execution depends upon a good will which is not often forthcoming.¹ Although the voluntary imposition of such a restriction is, at the time of writing, something which can only be regarded as a development of the distant future made desirable by the realization of the discrepancy between what "is" and what "ought" to be, it is absolutely necessary to free ourselves from the idea that "ought" has no practical bearing upon present political realities and that the introduction of religious-ethical standards into political affairs is to be lightly dismissed as irrelevant. It is only by progressing from what "is" to what "ought" to be that an advance in national and personal conduct is possible, and such an advance in international relations has been so slow partly, at any rate, because there have been no accepted extra-national sanctions or standards which would oblige nations to find adequate inducements to abandon unrestricted national sovereignty.

There are, however, two cogent reasons why such sanctions or standards must be found if a tolerable world-order, or European order, is to emerge, and they are to be found on the secular and the religious planes.

On the secular plane the reason is the evident breakdown of the system resulting from the arrogation by nations to themselves of unlimited sovereign rights, of which the Second World War is the most immediate and irresistible demonstration. Considered from the purely secular point of view, it is the supreme example of the dislocation of inter-state political machinery, and embodies in the most challenging form possible the complete disruption of that machinery.

The modern breakdown will have to be repaired by the introduction of a reform which is political only, namely the rethinking and readjustment of our ideas about sovereignty, with all that that implies in the economic and other spheres, whether by a form of federalism, at first limited and to be extended

¹ So do the practical effectiveness of the United Nations Charter and its security provisions.

gradually, or by any other modification which may be considered desirable. I do not say practicable, for desirability comes first: ways and means will be found of making it practicable. The main reason why the League of Nations was not allowed to succeed was that states did not wish it to succeed; they were afraid lest its operation might interfere with their obsolete notions of sovereign rights; and another tragedy, more far-reaching than that of 1914, has been necessary to awaken people to the realization that if civilized life is to survive it can only be through the severe limitation of national sovereignty, regionally and continentally. For we are learning, through an infinitely painful experience, the consequences of sovereignty without extra-national limitations, and, from the Christian standpoint, extra-human sanctions. Man in his present state is not good enough to have the free exercise of the right of self-rule.

Into other reasons for why a limitation of sovereignty, such as economic and transportation, is desirable, I will not enter: the literature of Federal Union is already so adequate that the reader can be referred to it if he wishes to pursue the point any farther.¹ I would only add that such a revision of the idea of sovereignty, in order to be effective, would necessitate the incorporation in international agreement principles such as arbitration, free trade, the protection of minorities, and some means of providing educational exchanges on a large scale and the promotion of international cultural relationships.²

From the standpoint of a Christian philosophy of politics, however, the question has to be approached differently. The Christian sees in sovereignty not something politically absolute but derivative. The political is one of the divinely ordained orders under which man must live as a social being unable to exist apart from community. "There is no power but God: the powers that be are ordained of God." This famous saying of St. Paul's is not a justification of political conservatism, or of the divine right of kings to do whatever they please, but a statement of how civil power stands, or should stand in a Christian world, in relation to the conception of divine sovereignty. If it were really believed that civil powers are delegated or derivative, and believed by men who were actuated by an acute sense of responsibility, it should produce caution in the wielding of power. It might be said that only in a world already wholly Christian could such a conception of sovereignty be operative. That may be so; but, on the other hand, Christian theology, denying the complete autonomy of human institutions, would maintain that without it there is no guarantee that states will not use power for selfish ends and thereby precipitate further crises similar to the present one. The limitation of sovereignty is not just an alternative to a system which makes possible arbitrary aggression but an end desirable because it will help to lessen the tension between the pride of human institutions and the sovereign nature of God. "Be still, and know that I am God:" this is the expression of the belief that in an ordered world God is the ultimate factor, whereas in a disordered world, an atomistic, anarchic world, it is the state, not God, which commands silence.

¹ E.g., *Federal Union*, Ed. Pearce, 1940; Streit, *Union Now*, 1939; R. W. G. Mackay, *The Case for Federal Union*, 1940; Lord Davies, *A Federated Europe*; W. Ivor Jennings, *A Federation for Western Europe*; Lionel Curtis, *The Way to Peace*. Unfortunately, however, nations are still as unwilling as ever to abandon their sovereign rights.

² The United Nations Charter is not designed to limit national sovereignty.

The assumption of absolute power by the state, then, is in direct opposition to the law of Him who is the source of all responsible sovereignty. But more than this is involved in the Christian conception of the sovereignty of God, for it is not enough to state a general theoretic principle; a particular form of sovereignty must be conceived which is compatible with the primary postulates of Christian theology. This can perhaps be better stated in this way.

The New Testament, where it touches upon the fact of nationhood (it cannot be said to deal deliberately with the state as such, except, as in the Book of Revelation, where it is thought of as the embodiment of Anti-Christ), regards it as an "order" given by God and a necessary category of human life; but as part of God's created order it cannot be endowed with any finality. God "has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." The primary fact is that of creation, and then the creation "of one blood all nations of men" as a necessary subdivision differentiated by environment, character, language, tradition, and so forth. That, St. Paul would say, is the "natural" order of life. Its variety is divinely ordained, but "in Christ" there is neither "Greek" nor "Jew," for national distinctions become subordinate when men of all races are inspired by a common *ethos* or are bound together by a common loyalty. Such a view, however, may have been more easily held by a *civis Romanus* before the emergence of the nation-state in the modern sense, though a Palestinian Jew, living nearer in spirit to the Maccabean tradition, might not have shared Paul's cosmopolitanism and supra-national loyalty. The Christian belongs to a supra-national community which is not limited by frontiers, at any rate in principle, but is at the same time a member of an individual state and acknowledges, in the things appertaining to his life as a citizen, its sovereignty. If, then, a form of international order (I hesitate to use the fine-sounding term "world-order") is to be projected which should be brought into conformity with what Christianity teaches about the nature of community, it must be one which is not in conflict with the view that nationhood or the political organization of states in relation to each other must be conditioned by respect due to a higher authority than the nation-state, at least in matters of administration, trade, etc. Christian thought in no way advocates the sinking of national differences by the substitution of a conglomerate mass of humanity for homogeneous national units, for without such units the national cultures which enrich the sum total of "civilization" would be impossible, even if one allows for the fact that to some extent, owing to the spread of "western civilization" a certain amount of fusion has already taken place.

Our conclusions so far, then, may be summarized as follows. The present system of national states possessing unlimited sovereignty has tragically broken down and the period characterized by ever-developing differentiation has shown itself incapable of producing an order which can guarantee reasonable relations between states and a life free from anxiety caused by the fear of war for their citizens. Some form of limited sovereignty is therefore not only desirable but necessary; and because man's political life is an object of moral judgment, Christian theology condemns the existing state of things as an offence against the principle of community

and as a repudiation of the higher sovereignty of God from which secular sovereignty derives, and is obliged, therefore, to offer the alternative (to be worked out on the political plane) of a revised notion of sovereignty which may be expressed in some idea as Federalism. But the only guarantee or sanction which can be considered lasting enough to assure (let us say) Federalism of success is the conscious submission of nations and their leaders to this higher sovereignty; in other words, by the acknowledgment of the supreme sovereignty of God. This does not, however, minimize the importance of political action, for it is by political means alone that the life of a state can be organized, and it is the work of politicians, not of theologians, to elaborate the schemes for the reform of the political order. Yet the Christian, because he believes that human institutions are derivative and not absolute, offers this not as one alternative among many, but as the only alternative to present chaos; for it is the bankruptcy of the humanistic attitude, according to which secular life is considered to be completely autonomous, which has been responsible for it; and the forms of "unitary" political reorganization are completely selfish, and therefore, from the Christian standpoint, sinful. All they achieve is the perpetuation of conflict and tension, for they are the extreme example of the claims of nations to have the right to exercise unrestricted sovereign power.

The Christian, therefore, regards the present violent dislocation of the historical process not simply as "failure," in the sense in which failure is attributed to a machine, but as sin. The "natural man," in St. Paul's phrase, rejects this conclusion; but it is man in his "natural" or unredeemed state who is responsible for the dislocation.

The realm of political action and decision cannot be regarded as outside the scope of moral judgment.

2

In the foregoing section it is national sovereignty in relation to the contact of states with other states which has been considered as bringing upon itself moral condemnation. But the political embraces the internal as well as the external relationship of a state as an aspect of sovereignty. It is therefore necessary to devote some attention to the state in its internal relationships as an object of moral judgment.

It cannot be said that any known form of state embodies perfectly the ideal of justice, though the democratic form comes nearest to this condition in so far as it protects and encourages the spiritual freedom and the individual rights of the citizen and refrains from the official persecution of religion. Though no unjust state can in any sense be called a Christian state, justice is not one of the specifically Christian virtues. Plato's *Republic*, indeed, begins as an inquiry into the meaning of justice, and the virtue does not figure prominently in the New Testament; the term which comes nearest to it is "righteous" (*dikaïos*), which is not a political but a moral or theological notion. But justice is so implied by the New Testament conception of human life that no social system can be sponsored by the Christian unless

it endeavours to embody it in its practice and its legislation. A Christian society can no more be imagined as existing without justice than it can without law and order; and because justice is an ethical as well as a juridical notion the system which embodies it or does not embody it comes legitimately within the scope of moral judgment.

A state which claims the right to exercise unlimited sovereignty over its citizens cannot be considered either just or Christian, for it makes "total" demands on human life: demands against which protest can legitimately be raised for secular as well as religious reasons. It is, however, significant that, at any rate in England, one of the greatest political revolutions was begun by men who objected to tyranny for religious reasons, and in Nazi Germany the most coherent challenge to the power of the state came from the ranks of the Evangelical Church. "We must obey God rather than men." The state in relation to its citizens has no more right to exercise unlimited freedom of action than it has as a member of an international community, though in certain abnormal circumstances such as a national emergency it may have to do so; for it is only one of the "orders" designed for the maintenance of community life and the welfare of the individual. It is therefore instrumental and not in itself absolute. It is a means, not an end; a convenient and necessary mechanism, the alternative to which would be anarchy, which is a lack of system as defiant of the notion of community as the tyrant-state is of spiritual liberty. Therefore every type of state claiming the right to be considered Christian must make adequate provision for the maximum of liberty compatible with the maintenance of order, an amount which will depend very largely upon the conception of responsibility held by the citizens of the state in question. It is, of course, possible to be a Christian in a tyrannical state; but it is difficult, for tyranny, which is the practical expression of injustice erected into a system of government, soon results in the suppression of religious freedom as it does in the loss of civil liberty.

The main aspect of a nation's life which has for a long time engaged the attention of politicians, economists, sociologists and theologians is its economic life, which is that expression of justice or injustice most relevant to the life of the average man. Resentment against its injustice is a moral emotion, having its source in the notion of what is fair or right. Christian theology finds the present system "right" or "wrong" or "sinful" in relation to the principles of Divine Creation, Divine Sovereignty, and Community. Monopolies of any kind which make it difficult for commodities to be fairly distributed and prevent or drastically restrict access to things which are made are violations of the principle by which all creative activity is seen as a reflection of God's initial act of creation. This is particularly true where the process is natural rather than artificial or mechanical, though practically it makes little difference whether the necessities of life are produced by simple or by complicated methods; whether it is coal or iron which is required or boots or bicycles or cheese. If a social order is not to conflict with Divine Sovereignty its economic and financial organizations must not be allowed to acquire supreme or very considerable power over human life. The state and its constituent forms and organizations must not control but must be controlled; they must not be the masters of the community but its servants. The state should concern itself

with the maintenance of justice and with the prevention of the exploitation of its members by other members or groups, and in this manner it has a moral purpose to fulfil; but it is itself equally open to criticism if it practises injustice or fails to promote justice. This implies the necessity to criticize any order, whether national or international, and means, too, that there must exist a standard of judgment to which the ethical criticism of the state can be referred, implying, again, the validity of contrasting "what is" with "what ought to be." This indicates that moral judgments are not so much valid or invalid when applied to politics as inevitable as long as man's moral sense is awake. The element of judgment is real and necessary, for without it progress to a better condition of life is not possible and history is seen to be lacking in moral content.

The character of national politics is not in principle fundamentally different from that of international politics, in so far as power is an element common to both; but the exercise of power by the state over its own subjects is a different problem from its exercise of power over the members of another state, mainly for the reason that it may be assumed that a state, except when governed by a revolutionary minority or a firmly entrenched tyranny, can count upon popular support in the execution of its laws; and where the laws are unpopular they can be amended or altered, or the civil population can legitimately engage in rebellion. No such means of restraint, however, exists (unless other nations unite in opposition) if a state decides to give practical expression in the form of conquest to its lust for power, or prefers to maintain its exercise of power to voluntary withdrawal. Theoretically laws passed by the British Government for the benefit of the Irish or the Indians might be better laws than any which they might pass themselves; nevertheless, the Irish and the Indians would prefer their own laws, however unsatisfactory they might be. People still believe that it is better to be self-governed than to be well-governed by others. Citizens of a state do not always resent the exercise of power by their own government, for they take it for granted as necessary to their well-being and as a condition of organized national life; but power exercised over a nation or nations by an alien state invariably provokes resentment. Power is a factor in politics which cannot be eliminated, at any rate for a long time to come; but it means different things in different contexts. Further, in civil law no man is a judge in his own case, and where he behaves as though he were he soon discovers his mistake. This does not happen as a matter of principle in international affairs because there is as yet no method of compelling states to accept limitation of sovereignty through arbitration, even though the machinery existed for this purpose up to 1939. Yet a citizen does not feel that his pride is offended if he is obliged to submit a dispute with a fellow-citizen to impartial legal settlement. This deeply rooted psychological element of prestige is responsible to a great extent for the "realistic" behaviour of states which ultimately leads to dislocations and breakdowns and constitutes one of the major problems for those who wish to see reason rather than emotion direct the relations of states with one another.

3

If in the political sphere a breakdown happens (the kind of breakdown which gives a decisive direction to history at a certain period), the proper thing is to examine its nature, and inquire into its causes, and, if practicable, propose an alternative. It is much easier to do this when the causes are political or economic, or both, than when they are moral; for whereas a new government or a new group seizing power, or an old government learning from its errors and changing its policy, may be able, through the executive power which it wields, to embark on a new course of policy as an alternative to that formerly pursued, this is not easy in the realm of morals. If one contemplates a historical period, such as that which can be considered contemporary, one can enumerate certain events, decisions, and policies which can be seen to have led to the world-crisis of 1938-45. The governments which tolerated the affairs or policies leading up to it can be replaced, as has happened in most European countries. New political decisions can be made; a new economic policy initiated, as was the case when the British Labour Government took office in the summer of 1945. A new policy can be devised having as its object the rendering of Germany harmless and the bringing of Russia and America in the main stream of world affairs. Fascism, having been at last found to be dangerous, can be extirpated. In 1660 the British monarchy was restored because the nation had grown weary of the Commonwealth, and in 1688 those who had not learned the lesson of 1642 were promptly taught it. If the causes of the breakdown or change are political or economic they can be remedied or their repetition made improbable by the institution of the proper economic or political machinery, or if the breakdown is complete, as it was in Russia in 1917, or France in 1940, or as in Germany in 1945 by building a new system. It is decided that this or that policy is wrong and another is better. Popular choice or governmental decision can propose an alternative.

In the realm of morals it is not so. The moralist may include in his diagnosis of a historical situation the factor of moral decadence, or the attitude of neutrality, sexual immorality, extravagance, social carelessness. But as morals are individual matters rather than collective (though their consequences can be assessed in terms of collective life) a government has no executive power to put these right. Moralists or statesmen may exhort the people to mend their ways; but not with the compulsory power which is the last resort of political decision. Added to this is the general unwillingness of people to pay due regard to what are said to be moral factors in a historical situation, even though it may be clear to the philosopher or theologian that these are actually the determining forces. Defeat in war may bring a people to its senses, but victory seldom does, even though it has been achieved at the cost of superhuman effort and after passing through a long period of disasters. The mild moral Puritanism of the France of 1945, for example, had nothing corresponding to it in England, though each country had been faced with the greatest crisis of its history. Yet, as I have endeavoured to indicate, behind the political events there usually lurk dark forces which emerge because of some great moral

defect in society. Political disasters or crises may not always be explicable in terms of moral defect, but often they may be, whether such explanation is acceptable or not. Revolutions, indeed, (except, possibly, in their South American sense) usually take the form of moral reaction against the situation preceding them, as in 1642 in England, 1789 in France, and 1917 in Russia. A Voltaire or a Lenin or a Cromwell denounced the situation leading to revolution because it was morally offensive, and in order to change the situation resort to force was inevitable. Revolutions in the last resort must seek their justification in the realm of morals, in the sense that those who initiate them pass moral judgments. The social condition of France in 1789 and the political condition in Russia from 1905 onwards were not examples of inefficiency alone but of something "wrong:" namely, tyranny, the overthrow of which could be justified in moral terms.

Because, therefore, a moral element is inherent in the political aspect of a historical situation no attempt to assess the nature of that situation can do justice to it unless the factor of moral judgment is taken into account. It becomes increasingly clear that the realms of ethics and of politics are contiguous.

4

The connection between morality and politics is clearer in a democratic system than in any other. In a properly ordered democratic state statesmen who are politically corrupt cannot "get away with it." If they are detected their political career is soon at an end; and where the executive is controlled by public opinion—allowing for all the weaknesses and defects of public opinion—and subject to popular constraint it is not likely to abuse its power, even over minorities under its jurisdiction. For where there is freedom of the Press and of association there is always a force capable of counteracting the tendency of a government to use its power arbitrarily. Democracy in the proper sense is diffused responsibility, and it is the fact of diffusion which strengthens the popular check on the power of the executive. It is, of course, true that public opinion can be oppressive towards minorities, but such oppression usually accompanies defective moral perception, and in being oppressive a people violates one of the fundamental postulates of democracy, namely, tolerance. In the truly democratic conscience there is an awareness that, no matter how great the need for the extension of the power of the state, such need cannot justify the placing of the state above the moral law. It is significant that the states which have ignored the moral law in their behaviour have been the dictator states, and that the basic argument against them is not in the last resort political but moral. It is dictator states which are most easily tempted to commit the sins inherent in the possession of unrestricted power; in a democratic state the organs of public life are not concentrated, and the temptation of power is not so overwhelming.

Yet democracy as a purely statistical concept—the right of the numerical majority to have what it wants—can fall victim to the temptation of power. An agnostic or atheist majority in the state, for example, can follow a repressive

policy towards a religious minority, and yet nominally call itself a democracy, and so, technically, it is. But it is the idea of democracy considered merely from the statistical or numerical standpoint which the Christian and the man of liberal inclination cannot accept with any warmth. Here we are back again at the idea of the moral disapproval of power when divorced from ethics. For it is the ethical, or, more precisely, the Christian element which alone can safeguard the political and moral values which democracy claims to cherish. Mr. Middleton Murry believes that "democracy" is only possible where it is Christianized; for it is rationally intelligible

only as the attempt to create a Christian political society—as the endeavour to form a political society wherein the individual members shall be given, as fully as possible, the responsibility of Christian freedom in the determination of their own lives as members of society. . . . The concept of Christian democracy is the solvent which undoes the human identification of socialism with the mere tyranny of the collective, and demolishes the tacit and intolerable assumption that the collective is always to be preferred to the individual.¹

Here, perhaps, is to be found an answer to Ortega y Gasset's problem: that of the tyranny of the collective, and the transformation of democracy into hyperdemocracy; and it is a problem which cannot be solved along political lines alone. I doubt, further, if it can be solved anywhere but in a Protestant democracy, for the record of the Roman Catholic Church as a tolerant community is not very inspiring. The highest types of democracy are to be found in states with a predominantly Protestant population: the British Commonwealth, the United States, the Scandinavian countries, and Switzerland. The Roman Church depends too closely upon hierarchical government ever to have much sympathy with democracy, and apologists for democracy in its ranks are not numerous.² It is a significant comment on Roman Catholic practice that Protestant communities are more tolerant of Catholics than Catholic communities are of Protestants.

In democracy—and I mean liberal-democracy—is to be found the most conspicuous example of the confluence of the political and the ethical, and that confluence is most intimate where democracy has a strongly Christian tradition behind it. It is because of this that I am convinced of the importance of Christian-democratic nations as the medium of the diffusion of the best that modern Western civilization is able to produce.

¹ J. Middleton Murry, *The Defence of Democracy*, Cape, 1939, pp. 216, 218.

² Notable examples of such apologists are Dr. Christopher Dawson (*Beyond Politics*, Sheed and Ward, 1939) and Professor Maritain (*The Rights of Man*, 1944, and *Christianity and Democracy*, Blcs, 1945). There may be others, but I do not know of them.

NOTE ON THE HEGELIAN TRADITION IN GERMAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

REFERENCE has been made in the foregoing pages to the indebtedness of National Socialism to the kind of political philosophy which was most typified and highly developed in the doctrines of Treitschke. In fact the names Treitschke, Bismarck, Bernhardi, Bülow, and Hitler are but examples, outcrops, as it were, of what would appear to be the form of political thought most congenial to the German mind. It goes, however, as far back as Hegel, who is the philosophical originator of the state-absolutism which has commended itself so acceptable to German statesmen and political thinkers, and with whose conception of the state and history generally one should be familiar if one desires to understand the forces which both directly and indirectly are causing the present European upheaval.

Hegel, who shared and exemplified in an extreme degree the German propensity for nebulous thinking, regarded the state, though he does not say how, as the self-realization of the Absolute. "The state, which is the realized substantive will, having its reality in the particular self-conscious raised to the plane of the universal" (whatever that means) "is absolutely rational. This substantive unity is its own motive and absolute end. In this end freedom attains its highest right. This end is the highest right over the individual, whose highest duty in turn is to be a member of the state" (*Philosophie des Rechts*, §258). It is only by being a member of the state that the individual has any real existence, truth, or ethical status (*Objektivität, Wahrheit, Sittlichkeit*). The state is the spirit which abides in the world, and there realizes itself consciously. It is the "march of God in the world" (*der Gang Gottes in der Welt*). In it the "rights of personal individuality receive adequate freedom." The state is the "embodiment of freedom, not according to objective liking, but to the conception of the will, that is, in its *universal and divine character*" (§260). Again, the state is the divine will which "unfolds itself in the actual shape of an organized world" (§270). This suggests the identification of a particular state with the universal spirit. Freedom seems to be the equivalent of the self-determination of the state, and the individual's freedom consists in his identification with the "real will" of the state. This is scarcely distinguishable from the Nazi view of the relation of the individual to the state, for his own "will" has to be in conformity with the "*Volkswille*," the "will" of the Party and of the Führer. From Rousseau to Bosanquet theories of the state have been inseparable from discussions of what is the nature of the real will, the general will, and the actual will. Bosanquet, in his *Philosophical Theory of the State*, has made this the main theme of his treatise, and has dealt with this aspect of political theory in so far as it concerns Hegel; but treatises concerned with the subject of the will (in the political sense) are burdened with a sense of unreality, as Hobhouse, in his penetrating criticism of Hegel and Bosanquet in *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* has pointed out. Nazi political philosophy is also obsessed with it. Krieck,¹ for example, who

¹ "In so far as the state forms and binds into one collective will the multiplicity of individual wills, its essential characteristic is power. The unity of the state is the standard by which must be measured the power of a people, the expression of the fact that the national collective will (*völkische Gesamtwille*) is living in each individual will, and that the individual will is absorbed into the collective will." Ernst Krieck, *Der Staat des deutschen Menschen*, p. 34.

shares with Hegel belief that the freedom of the individual is most fully realized in his absorption into the community, insists that the value of personality consists not in that which differentiates it from others, but in the extent to which it embodies the characteristic nature of the community. The emphasis, as elsewhere in modern German thought, is on the complete subordination of the individual to the community.

The Nazis speak of the *Volk* rather than of the *Staat*: but in practice the distinction tends to become blurred. That which is right is that which furthers the interests of the *Volk*, for the *Volk* is the all-important reality. With Hegel it was the state. Whereas Kant makes a plea for the moralizing of international relationships on a basis of acknowledged law binding upon states, Hegel takes it for granted that the state is above law and morality: it is its own law. There cannot, and need not, be any sanctions to enforce proper relations between states, for against the state there is no arbiter but force: nations are quite independent of one another, and treaties are not necessarily binding (§330). International law is no more than a "good intention" (§333). Hegel's view is that, in contrast with the absolute right of a nation with a world-historic mission, whose task is to be the "bearer of the current phase of the development of the world-spirit, the spirits of other existing nations are void of right, and they, like those other epochs which are gone, count no longer in the history of the world" (§347). This expresses perfectly the spirit behind Nazi imperialistic racialism. Hitler could not have put it better. The colonial views of the Nazi, too, do not differ from Hegel's conception of the rights of backward peoples. Civilized nations may treat as barbarians those who are behind them in the "essential elements of the state." The rights of backward peoples are purely formal, for they cannot assert any claims to the possession of such rights (§351).

Hegel says that he is not thinking of any actual state, but rather of the "idea," the actual "God," as he calls it. But it is curious that the kind of state which he was describing became a historical reality in Germany; so much so that the Third Reich can be described as Hegelianism gone mad. There is the same de-moralization of politics, the same attribution of absoluteness to the state (or *Volk*); the same erection of the state and its policies into ends in themselves so that they cannot be judged by any general moral standard. In fact judgment passed on history is not moral judgment at all, for it is its own judge. "The history of the world is the world's court of judgment," he says, borrowing Schiller's well-known dictum: *die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*. How this can be we are not told, nor does Hegel offer much explanation of the confused verbiage in which he involved himself when writing about world-history. The world-spirit, as he calls it, the spirit of the world, the unlimited spirit, is the product of the dialectic of history, of the conflicts and contacts of states in relation with each other. Again Hegel does not say what this emergent "spirit" is, or how it emerges from such dialectic operations, or how the Absolute, or God, or the spirit, or whatever it is, can become incarnate in an administration—plus-the-people, which is all the state is. Much of his political philosophy and philosophy of history is rendered obscure or meaningless by his use of terms which indicate a thing with a purely theoretical rather than a practical existence.

It should be added that Hegel's idea of the function of religion in the state is deeply erastian. If it is of a "true sort," not displaying a "negative or hostile attitude towards the state" but supporting it, it has a definite and useful place; but when the Church deals with things outside its province, even if those are concerned merely with matters of ethics and reason, it passes over into the province of the state (§270). This, again, is an accurate anticipation of the Nazi attitude towards the German churches. If the state is the realized ethical idea, the "divine will" in actuality, institutional religion would appear to be superfluous.

The characteristics of Hegel's philosophy of the state outlined above make it rather difficult to accept Dr. Gooch's judgment that Hegel, "whatever his faults, is on the side of the angels."¹ Rather is Hobhouse's summing up nearer the truth:

"It was the Hegelian conception of the state which was designed to turn the edge of the principle of freedom by identifying freedom with law; of equality, by substituting the conception of discipline; of personality, by merging the individual in the state; of humanity, by erecting the state as the supreme and final form of human association."²

A passing reference has already been made to the teaching of Heinrich von Treitschke, another of the formative influences in the political thinking of nineteenth century Germany. Although he cannot be regarded as a forerunner of the advocates of the totalitarian state in its modern form (the state is "not the whole of the people's life"³) his thought is typical of the apologists for the theory of power-politics in its peculiarly German form. Much of his *Politik* is, of course, simply an analysis of political institutions as they are; but on the other hand he influenced his contemporaries and successors by describing not only what the state was, but what, as a German, he considered it should be. His teaching on the relation of the state with other states, for example, is typical. "Every sovereign state has the undoubted right to declare war at its pleasure, and is consequently entitled to repudiate its treaties."⁴ It is clear, he says, that international agreements are not absolute, but voluntary self-restrictions. "Hence it follows that the establishment of permanent international arbitration courts is incompatible with the nature of the state."⁵ The sovereignty of the state is absolute: there is no authority above it.⁶ His crude glorification of war anticipates the attitude of contemporary Germany. War, he says, must be a permanent institution. "God above us will see to it that war shall return again, a terrible medicine for mankind diseased."⁷ "The grandeur of war lies in the utter annihilation of puny man in the great conception of the state."⁸

¹ *German Theories of the State*, in *Studies in Modern History*, p. 220, Longmans.

² J. C. Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, p. 23. In *Philosophy* for January, 1940, Prof. T. M. Knox disputes this interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of the state, referring to passages suggesting that Hegel was almost a liberal, believing in freedom of conscience and rejecting the idea that might is right. But he carefully ignores the aspects of the *Philosophie des Rechts* mentioned above. It is, further, curious that this interpretation of Hegel's thought should be so widespread if there is no basis for it in Hegel's writings. There is, however, no necessity to look for detailed resemblances between Hegelianism and Prussianism or National Socialism.

³ *Politics*, Tr. Dugdale, 1917, p. 53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Treitschke regards the state as a personality, a notion which is in direct line with the "organic" theories of the state which were popular with the philosophers of the Romantic movement and which had their origin in the rudiments of political thought between the outbreak of the French Revolution and the battle of Waterloo. German patriotic thinking has always toyed with the idea of the state as a person, with a kind of soul of its own, a conception which has received its most extreme expression in the idea of the corporative state.

Spengler, who cannot be described as a political thinker, has, however, influenced recent, that is post-war, German political thought through his *Preussentum und Sozialismus* and through the general trend of his *Untergang des Abendlandes*. He is with Treitschke in glorifying war. "War," he says, "is the creator of all great things,"¹ and at the end of the *Untergang des Abendlandes* there is this significant passage:

"World history is the world court, and it has ever decided in favour of the stronger, fuller, and more self-assured life decreed to it, namely, the right to exist, regardless of whether its right would hold before a tribunal of waking consciousness. Always it has sacrificed truth and justice to might and race, and passed doom of death upon men and peoples in whom truth was more than deeds, and justice than power."²

Spengler sees no desirable alternative to this interpretation of history, for it seems to be what he wants it to be, and his judgment is certainly in accordance with German political behaviour.

Ever since Fichte delivered his famous lectures in Berlin much of German philosophy and history was designed to strengthen the national consciousness and to create the intellectual condition which would be favourable to the rise of Prussia to the position of political leadership in Germany. Chiefly instrumental in the hastening of this process was the so-called "Prussian school" of historians, whose most distinguished representatives were Droysen, Sybel, and Treitschke. History was for them largely German, and particularly Prussian, history. Sybel violently attacked non-German powers, including France, Austria, and the Roman Church, and Treitschke treated his students to attacks on France, England, Democracy, and the Jews. History as conceived and taught by the members of this school was entirely subjective, designed to glorify the Prussian spirit; it was history harnessed to politics. "If the purpose of history is to stir a nation to action," Dr. Gooch comments on this school, "Droysen, Sybel and Treitschke were among the greatest of historians. If its supreme aim is to discover truth and to interpret the movement of humanity, they have no claim to a place in the first class."³ The significant fact for our time is that "subjective" history has again triumphed in Germany; once more history is "German" history, indistinguishable from political propaganda. A glance at any German bookshop in the summer of 1939 showed how "history" was being written in the spirit which helped to pave the way for the domination of Prussia in 1870.

¹ *The Decline of the West*, vol. II, p. 471.

² *Ibid.*, II, p. 507.

³ *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, Longmans, p. 155.

PART TWO

FORM AND SPIRIT

BOOK ONE

THE SEARCH FOR FORM

CHAPTER I

CIVILIZATION AND THE SEARCH FOR FORM

I

THE world has been threatened with a major breakdown because of international anarchy, which is the political equivalent of absence of form. It is faced to-day with the choice between civilization and chaos, between remaining on the one hand an agglomeration of mutually irritating individual states without a common basis of outlook, and on the other an association of free societies which find their common ground in a universally diffused system of values and political and cultural ideas held in common. If an ordered society is ever to be realized, it must have a general understanding of the common values which alone can guarantee civilization and also, in addition to being a technically co-ordinated whole, must appreciate the necessity for a rational and a religious view of life. Man is made neither to live among machines nor merely to consume their products; for the conception of civilization as primarily a technical achievement is equivalent to thinking of a skeleton as constituting the true nature of man. Man, however, though he cannot exist without his skeletal substructure, is primarily a creature of flesh and blood and spirit. In the language of St. Paul, he is somatic *and* psychic. Even the materialist, in spite of his bleak and barren faith, is obliged tacitly to admit this, and in doing so has denied his own materialism.

The open society about which we have spoken will have to be a planned society, shapely, and closely knit, not sprawling and consisting of units haphazardly touching each other. Its internal relations will not have to grow by accident, but should be planned and allowed to develop in an orderly manner, as would be the case if there were community of values and a common political outlook. Such an open, planned society will not come through bilateral agreements between states but through general consultation and planned cultural interchanges. There have already been several examples of attempts to promote cultural understanding between nations, but they have not been intensively developed. Such organizations as the British Council, The English Speaking Union, the pre-war Anglo-German Academic Bureau, the Friends of the U.S.S.R., were designed to encourage interchange of culture; but they were private organizations, often extremely partisan, or unrelated to any general international ideal of cultural planning. In spite of co-operation through the League of Nations and the International Labour Office, collaboration did not spread in any great measure to the sphere of cultural

relations. Education was still regarded as a national possession rather than as a means of achieving some degree of European citizenship. The later developments on the continent would in any case have rendered such work difficult, for the result of the German Revolution was to diffuse Nazi ideas of culture through clever propaganda while at the same time cutting Germany off from cultural movements in other countries.¹ That is typical of the new political "dynamism" which has attempted to shut the mind and starve the soul of Europe. Yet something more than such bilateral arrangements is required: namely, a co-ordinated scheme by which each nation can be taught to appreciate the culture of other nations, while at the same time developing its own national tradition, not as a selfishly owned possession but as a contribution to the common treasury. Only democratic states will be able to do this, for they alone will be inspired by such a vision of a free society as will promote the desired collaboration on a broad basis without prejudice. Without some common appreciation of the universality of the values which are the flesh and blood of culture and civilization there can be no world-civilization, and the alternative to that is the anarchical condition of the present.

The period of world-history which we are now entering is darkened by fear: it is fear of the recurrence of the state of things which have contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War which is leading so many people to crave feverishly for a New Order; but fear, while it may be an excellent deterrent, does not inspire progress. The absurdity of neutrality, the precarious conditions under which small states have been permitted to live, the terrible dangers to which civilization is exposed if strong men with resolute wills and closed minds seize power, the knowledge that the barrier separating a life of freedom from one of slavery is very thin: these have been driving nations together in sheer self-defence. But defensive action alone will not bring an open society to birth and impose form upon chaos. And were it a common scheme of civilized values rather than the diffusion of the consequences of a technical civilization which had spread throughout the world, nations would not be in the great peril in which they now find themselves.

For just as economic control will be a major instrument in the prevention of the return to world-anarchy, so will the planning of those other things which belong to civilization be a means of creating an attitude of mind indispensable to the evolution of nations into a society of peaceful collaborators appreciating each other's capabilities. The control of the irrational forces (which are in the first place personal, not technical), whose explosive nature has been so catastrophic, will be one of the prior claims on the attention of statesmen and educationists. Hitherto the "dynamic" factors impinging upon history have been fanaticisms, emotional outbreaks, awareness of "world-missions," such as the White Man's Burden, the Mission of the Germanic Race (or rather of one Germanic race with a strong dash of the Slavonic in it),

¹ Three years before Hitler came to power a group of enlightened German jurists and political economists founded a periodical called *Inter Nationes*. The contributors included Prof. Jäckh (formerly President of the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik), Prof. W. Schücking, and other distinguished men. Its aim was to give some account of cultural relationships between Germany and other lands, and was issued by the German Institute for Foreigners and a department of Berlin University. Its aim was "not politics, but the service of the spirit which unites all civilized peoples." One of the first acts of the Nazis was to suppress it.

the World Mission of Nippon, and so forth. They are signs of an immature state of mind which is appealed to by primitive emotion and sub-rational impulses, and it is encouraged by the anarchical state of society. These arise out of night-side of human nature, though in them there is good as well as evil. They supply the dynamic to revolutions, and they appear to be irresistible to a large number of people. Yet although they have their seat in the individual soul-life, they cannot be exorcised in the same way as an individual can be subjected to psychoanalysis. Ethnopathy, if one may invent a word to describe the spiritual disease which afflicts a nation, cannot be treated on an individual basis but through collective action, by means of carefully worked out policy. These emotional outbursts and fanaticisms may be canalized by the endeavour to encourage creative enthusiasms which are not directed towards selfish ends, and the doing of this will be one of the great problems for the future. Doubtless some preliminary work can be accomplished by the removal of economic causes of dissatisfaction, of political insecurity, and the feeling which some nations have of inferiority. But it is more than a technical task, important though this aspect of the problem may be.

2

We are living in a world which is lacking distinctness of form. There are, of course, "styles" of national life, though these are nowadays usually to be found at some distance from the great technopolitan centres, and not in the urbanized industrial civilization which has spread throughout the world and which has had its origin in the West. Technopolis is very similar wherever it is found; whether it be Osaka, Yokohama, Pilsen, Birmingham, or Pittsburgh; megapolitan culture is much the same everywhere, and the effect of technical development, both in its older and in its modern stages ("palæotechnic" and "neotechnic," to borrow Mr. Lewis Mumford's terms), has been, in its impact upon urban life, to create vast mushroom towns erected in record time for purely utilitarian purposes. The uncontrolled proliferation of industrial towns in Britain during the swift expansion of industry was one of the ugliest things which mankind has produced: contemporary reports in the 1840's on the state of Manchester, for example, reveal the appalling degradation of the inhabitants who were compelled to live in the most unhygienic and nauseating surroundings imaginable. Not until the fifth decade of the nineteenth century was there any general awakening of the public conscience to the terrible nature of the conditions in which the greater part of the industrial population of the richest country in the world was living. Manufacturing cities spread and reproduced themselves with alarming rapidity and absence of form, though in Germany, where state-control was tighter and where there was a better notion of order, the result was not so depressing and disastrous.

The population of Dortmund, for example, increased in thirty years from just under 200,000 to 527,000 in 1929, but without the characterlessness which makes Sheffield such an offence to the eye. In Russia the swift expansion of industry due to state planning led at first to the building of mushroom towns, especially in the Trans-Ural region, where the towns, it is said, were as jerry-

built as their prototypes in the West. In England new towns such as Dagenham sprang up rapidly, most of them resembling extensive red rashes, accompanied by the horror of ribbon-building. In Germany in particular, town expansion from the year 1922, say, assumed less unlovely forms and was designed to produce the maximum of convenience through the application of functional architecture. But whether expanding industrialism results in back-to-back houses or in great complexes of flats equipped with children's playgrounds, post-offices, communal laundries, and stores, the consequence is the creation of the mass-outlook. On the whole, however, more is to be hoped from these new experiments in planning than from the old, haphazard agglomerations which preceded them. Although they possess a new kind of uniformity they are immeasurably more hygienic than the older working-class quarters and are designed to provide more open spaces and to admit more air and sunlight than the older Coketowns. They give a certain recognizable *external* form to the civilization of which they are a part, but tend to contribute to the spiritual formlessness of the age. The collective has mass without having achieved inner form.

In his book *The Culture of Cities* Mr. Lewis Mumford has taken the mining town as the salient example of the spirit of utilitarianism which inspired the older or palæotechnic age in industry, for it is purely utilitarian, its builders having made no attempt to introduce clean planning, nor any superfluity such as structural beauty, and in conjunction with the mine the railway was the next most potent agent in the general diffusion of the ugliness inseparably associated with the *laissez-faire* period of English industrialism. These two are the apotheosis of use-value and at the same time the denial of culture: an almost Satanic repudiation of form. Such centres have been the homes of democracy; they have also been the homes of violent revolt. In this respect there is little to choose between Clydeside and a pre-war industrial suburb of Berlin. They are the hives where the mass-man swarms, the man without style, the man who is even satisfied with formlessness. Political extremism is not found in rural regions, but in riverside slums, in the mining towns of the Ruhr, in the rookeries of revolutionary Paris, and in the Viborg suburb of revolutionary Petrograd: that is, in places conspicuous for their lack of style or form. Such is the legacy of economic freedom, and to-day civilization is paying the price.

The problem for the sociologist and the politician is: How can this hive-life be given form? How can it become civilized? How can the mass-man become a person who appreciates culture and develop an appetite for the finenesses of life? Culture in the deepest sense does not arise out of the megapolitan mass, though many cities are centres of culture. It is not the product of the mass-majority, but of the middle class, a class which is now smaller than it used to be but no longer alone in its opportunity for having access to the culture of the ages. True culture, as distinct from intellectuality or pedantry, is the possession of the very few; the degree in which a community is civilized depends upon the manner in which this culture penetrates to the masses and infects them with its openness of spirit and awareness of the more profound values. Culture, in a word, is the achievement of form, and mass-democracy is the losing of it, the movement away from it. Yet if civilization, as distinct

from its merely external accompaniments, is to be achieved, it will be achieved when there is a more even dissemination of a sense of values and when people increasingly realize that an awareness of them should be an integral part of the democratic consciousness. We have said earlier in this book that democracy is not primarily concerned with æsthetic but rather with moral-political values; but it nevertheless has a vital concern in the culture of the spirit.

3

It is therefore as necessary to plan cultural life as it is to plan economic life. The totalitarian rulers have been logical and have done both in an attempt to rescue their countries from drabness and formlessness, only to impose upon them a form hard and unyielding, to the exclusion of all plasticity. Of the two great modern totalitarian states Russia appears to be developing a popular culture which contains most possibility of liberalization; for the *volkisch* or racial conception of culture in Nazi Germany was tribal in its exclusiveness. Culture has been "planned" in each of these countries, but in each it has been cramped and restricted by being subordinated to doctrinaire theories of the state and society. In the Western democracies, however, especially in Britain, little attempt is being made to achieve a planned culture and to give form to a society so conspicuously formless and lacking in standards of values and in which appreciation and awareness are so pathetically lacking. In so many ways the so-called "British way of life" is but another term for unco-ordinated effort and life without form. So little guidance and initiative are displayed by the government that "free" and irresponsible money-making agencies are still allowed to play far too great a part in influencing the minds of the people. There is far too much pandering to the lowest common denominator instead of following a definite policy designed to raise the level of popular culture.¹ The difficulty, it is clear, is in striking a balance between dictation and freedom of choice, though in time of war little consideration is given to individual freedom. Yet if normal periods can be regarded as of no less importance than those of extreme peril, one cannot logically object to the introduction of the principle of deliberate guidance for the ultimate benefit of the community. Some kind of cultural planning, preferably as plastic as possible, is desirable if democratic life is to be given form and rescued from spiritual and æsthetic formlessness.

A wise national policy in regard to the film industry, for example, is long overdue. The cinema has been for a generation the most potent force in

¹ Some (though presumably those who are responsible for national policy are not among them) are aware of this. Thus the well-known musical critic, Mr. W. J. Turner, writes: "The B.B.C. has to consider the opinions and feelings of the majority, and this it is at great pains to do. There is an elaborate system of obtaining cross-sections of public opinion, and tables are kept, showing the percentages of listening-in to all types of programme. These reveal, among other things, the deplorable fact that the public taste had so sunk (largely owing to social conditions and general loss of direction) before the war that the cinema-organ was apparently more popular than good light orchestral music, and that crooning found more favour than the comic or sentimental songs of Sullivan, Strauss, Offenbach and other gifted composers of opera or music-hall." (*The Spectator*, January 30, 1942). The primary business of the B.B.C., he says, should be to provide the best in all fields, whether by so doing it becomes popular or unpopular, and to satisfy those whose taste is undeveloped in whatever time is left over.

forming standards of taste; yet it has been allowed to develop under private enterprise and with a freedom from control in a manner reminiscent of the freedom allowed to industry during the period of the Industrial Revolution. As the result of *laissez-faire* applied to entertainment the public mind has become Americanized, and the insistent spread of the Hollywood picture of life has inflicted what may be irreparable harm on the imaginative outlook of a whole generation. Hollywood and Chicago rather than Stratford and Canterbury have provided the norms of popular discrimination. Not the individual cultivation of taste through home-music but the adenoidal nasalities of American popular crooners have been the most formative musical influence on the mind of the people. It is desirable that the British public should receive the best that the American film industry has to offer; but the uncontrolled importation of all kinds of films is not calculated to increase public demand for the best. Here, as in other aspects of life, a wise and balanced policy is required. Yet although public opinion is opposed to capitalist exploitation of labour and to its taking advantage of its economic weakness, it is not yet opposed to such exploitation of taste and the subjection of immature minds to unhelpful taste-forming influences. If *laissez-faire* as a doctrine is dead, it is surely dead in other areas of life than the economic.¹

The danger, however, to which any nation might be exposed, of developing into a "closed" instead of an "open" society through the planned encouragement of its own traditional culture and a systematic effort to raise the general level of taste and discrimination would be lessened if such a nation considers itself as being in continuous organic contact with other democratic communities. This organic relationship can exist only between democracies because, in our opinion, only democracies can create an open world-community. Secret police, petty tyrannies, absolutisms: these erect barriers in the way of free cultural intercourse, and as long as they exist it will be folly to envisage the arrival of such an "open" condition of society as we have written about. Modern thought has a conspicuous place for the organic, for life is to be understood in terms of organism, not of mechanics, and where there is uncontrolled cell-proliferation there is degeneration and the organism breaks down. For a world without form, in which the interrelations of states take the form not of the direct knowledge of one another's culture but of external contacts such as trade and formal diplomacy, cannot be conceived of in terms other than mechanical. It is not given unity and shape through the possession by its constituent members of a common basis in identity or similarity of value-sense. The political, economic, and cultural activities of national societies must be brought into this organic relationship with each other if world-history is to

¹ The members of the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films expressed in 1932 the view that it was the function of an efficient censorship to reflect public opinion, not to lead it (*The Film in National Life*, Allen and Unwin, 1932, p. 34). The important question, however, is not of censorship but of the part an enlightened policy can play in the development of a higher standard of public discrimination. The manager of a cinema belonging to one of the great film corporations told the present writer that he estimated the average mental age of his patrons (judging by the kind of film which they enjoyed) to be that of a child of fourteen. The manager of a Glasgow cinema told the president of the Scottish Educational Association a short time before the war that he estimated the average mental age of his adult patrons to be that of a child of twelve. Few films from America are designed to encourage the maturing of such a mentality. That is why more control and guidance are necessary.

evolve in such a manner as to create a place where people can live without anxiety and bound together by the bonds of sympathy and mutual appreciation. At present the contacts between nations are only peripheral; and as long as this is so the emergence of a society of nations will be long delayed.

It is not to be imagined, however, that there will be a sudden conversion, within a decade or two, of all the nations to a fully-fledged enlightened parliamentary democracy on the Anglo-Saxon model; but there should be possible in Europe, at least, a gradual advance towards a not far-removed understanding of the basic civilized values, and what happens in Europe may be the determining factor in history for many generations. Such an advance will not have to be casual or haphazard: it will have to be planned, and in such a manner that the cultural policy of one nation will be developed with a view to breaking down national prejudices and promoting an awareness of the contributions of individual nations to the civilization of an open society; for it is ultimately not the universal diffusion of technical knowledge that is going to produce world-unity, in the deepest sense, but an underlying sympathy of outlook. This will not come spontaneously, but will have to be encouraged and directed by those who will have in their power the shaping of policies. A free association of peoples is the international counterpart of the free democratic national community. Its achievement will mark the realization of what can be described as "world-history."

There can, of course, be no infallible guarantee that irrational forces will not break out, and that the masses will cease being mass-minded; no assurance can be given that henceforward catabolic forces will be for ever suppressed or sublimated; but it is more likely that a planned attempt to produce world-mindedness in addition to nation-mindedness will offer some promise of lasting peace and prosperity.

In order to develop form civilization will have to be guided by definite ideals and policies. Of these the abolition of economic inefficiency and self-sufficiency, of currency barriers and other obstacles to trade, will be among the foremost. To this we can add the abolition of drabness—that is, of formlessness, of the negation of the organic—and the diffusion of culture and ideals, by educating for freedom, aided by the re-planning of the hive-city on biotechnic lines, where possible, so as to contribute to the development of a sense of form in the external environment. And finally, as we have suggested, there must be the planning of educational policy so as to achieve in the realm of the mind what has been done by other forms of international agreement. Nations have been able to collaborate on such matters as the Postal Union, maritime law, health services, the work of the International Labour Office; that is, in more or less external matters. It is difficult, therefore, to see why, in Europe at any rate, progress should not be made in the direction of an underlying cultural and spiritual unity.

4

Progress can be partially described as the gradual victory not only of persuasion over force but of man over the "demonic" powers¹ which sweep

¹ I remind the reader of Tillich's definition of the "demonic" as that which is destructive of form (see above, page 42).

over human life and give direction to history, using politics as the means of achieving their ends, and sucking into the current of their movement the values and moral standards by which mankind has been accustomed to live. These forces have always been in operation; sometimes, as at present, they break out with a ferocity which makes one wonder if evil can actually possess an objective existence, manifesting itself in men and events. The terrific vision of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse has once more been given historical reality in our world, and man feels again that he is the victim of sinister powers which he is unable to control and which are engaged in the process of destroying civilization. Such are the depth and range of evil at certain times that even to-day one meets serious suggestions that belief in a personal devil is not, after all, as incredible as it might seem. History is in great measure the process of conflict between good and evil, but between human good and human evil, not between God and Satan on a cosmic stage. There is, however, no reason for being surprised that certain men or societies with mythopoeic talent have depicted in legend and drama the struggle between these two antagonists using this world as the scene of their conflict and human beings as pawns in a supramundane strategy. Such a picturization of moral conflict, however, commends itself to the imagination rather than to the moral sense; for whereas the victory over evil in human life is possible, it is difficult to see how human beings can contest discarnate evil intelligences. St. Paul clearly believed in such intelligences, in the "world-rulers of this darkness," in "spiritual wickedness in high places." Shakespeare, at one time, may have had what he thought was an intuitive perception of "powers" which played a game with human life, a vicious, incomprehensible game. But Shakespeare had no clearly Christian outlook, and St. Paul was writing to people who were oppressed by the fear of those evil intelligences which corresponded, perhaps, to the angelic powers; his purpose was to assure them that, if such intelligences existed, Christ was greater than they, and could strengthen them so as to rid them of their fears. Man can, therefore, if he will, defeat the evil "powers," whatever they may be. Primitive man, through the acceptance of a higher religion, has freed himself from domination by the diabolism of animism and tribal superstition. Modern man has freed himself from the domination of religion, but he is no nearer to liberation from being dominated by a diabolism which expresses itself in political conflict, the eruption of devastating forces into the historical process, and the subversion of moral values. Industrial democracy, moral nihilism, and war are at present the enemies of progress and of the achievement of a humane civilization. Unless he masters them, man is doomed.

There are several ways of mastering them. One is through politics. It should be possible to find a political solution to political questions, even if it happens that no political question can be for long dissociated from considerations of morality. The political answer, for example, to the chaos which has reigned in Europe because of an unreasonable emphasis on national sovereignty is a system which reduces the extent of that sovereignty and increases the sense of interdependence; namely, some system which separates nationhood from unlimited political sovereignty. The economic answer to economic chaos is planning. Political and economic questions demand political

and economic solutions; for even though moral issues are deeply involved in them, moral or religious principles by themselves cannot provide a complete solution. To think so is to be guilty of sentimentalizing and simplifying problems which are rational and complicated. In the modern world technique and organization play an ever-increasing part, and their functions and applications do not depend upon any system of ethics for their validity. They require no religious sanction. It is when technique and organization take forms and are used for purposes which are contrary to human welfare and violate the human spirit that the moral factor is seen to be relevant. Only indirectly can religion contribute to the solution of political and economic problems, and that by informing the spirit of both, by removing from them whatever is likely to cause fear or oppression, thereby preventing the political and the economic from becoming demonic powers and instruments of the irrational and anti-personal in history.

5

The quest for form should be fulfilled, in the cultural and political spheres, through guidance by the state. A comparison of pre-war democratic states with the Fascist states shows that whereas the latter had a definite "style" or "form," the former had little. They showed lack of clarity, too little evidence of co-ordination, too little sense of purpose and organic unity. In France and Spain democracy was centrifugal and anarchic; it had no inner principle of cohesion. Any society will decay if not held together by some spiritual principle. The achievement of the National Socialists was to give to the German nation this principle of cohesion which had been lacking during the period of the Weimar Republic. The slogan *Ein Führer, ein Volk, ein Reich*, provided an object of national devotion such as the Germany of 1919-1933 had not possessed. The Nazi achievement, moreover, was not wholly evil. Much in Nazi Germany was not evil, just as there is much in democratic states that is not good. A sincere attempt, for example, was made to give the nation "style," a "German way of life," which need not have been any more offensive than the "English way of life" which is so often mentioned with pride but which most people are at a loss to describe in positive terms.

One element in this "style" was the fostering of the feeling for tradition. This was not always bound up with the doctrine of the *Herrenvolk*. Periodicals such as *Ewiges Deutschland*, the continuous policy of putting before the public the best in the tradition of German art as contrasted with surrealism and cynicism in post-war painting, the "cultural" pages of the big newspapers, the prohibition of such things as crooning, were examples of a policy of encouraging people to cherish their own tradition which any democratic nation might profitably copy.¹ There is still far too little guidance given in these matters in democratic states; a formless industrialized mass has been allowed to emerge, little having been done to give it form and style. One reason for the successful appeal of Fascism and Nazism was that they tried to provide nations with "style" in an age of

¹ I had adequate opportunity during the years 1933-39 to observe this policy, which I admired despite my loathing of National Socialism.

stylelessness. The tragic paradox consisted in the fact that in themselves they eventually proved to be destructive of form because of the demonic character of their political dynamism.

One method of achieving political form in the period between the wars was through the expression of the conception of the "organic" state, in which relationships between people and groups of people within the state were conceived not as mechanical and accidental but as functional in the sense that they were all contributing to the unitary life of the whole. It was not a new view of the state; indeed, it went back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, deriving from Stein, Görries, and Fichte and revived by Moeller van den Bruck,¹ Carl Schmitt, Ernst Krieck,² and other modern German political philosophers. These thinkers viewed the state as an organism, achieving unity through the will to live which pervades its many limbs. It is the state which guarantees freedom and culture for the individual. Classes, individuals, education: all aspects of the national life are to the state-organism what fingers, ears, eyes, etc., are to the body. The doctrine is conditioned partly by the typically German habit of mind finding its satisfaction in a kind of race-mysticism, and also by the peculiar history of the German people, speaking one language, sharing a common culture, yet never achieving political unity. In its modern form the organic conception of the state is identical with the totalitarian, in which the state is endowed with absolute, omnipotent sovereignty over the community, each section of the nation's life, both public and private, being made to serve the welfare of the *Volk*, but enslaved body and soul to the state, in which alone is vested authority. In the Nazi state, which was the example *par excellence* of the organic state, private associations ceased: every aspect of the cultural life of the nation was subjected to the party machine. The *Reichskulturkammer*, for example, was a body which exercised far more

¹ His book, *The Third Reich*, greatly influenced Nazi political thought.

² "A people is not a sum-total, not a mechanical aggregate of individual people who are independent, but a suprapersonal unity, bound in a supra-individual reality through common conditions of life, through identity of origin and destiny, language, spiritual content, values, and purposes, through a common consciousness and striving. The state is vitally necessary as an organic system within the organism of the nation; in it the national will finds its form and becomes organized for action" (Ernst Krieck, *Der Staat des Deutschen Menschen*, p. 34). It is a mistake to think that National Socialism conquered Germany by the use of emotional propaganda alone. Eminent jurists and political thinkers such as Krieck and Carl Schmitt justified its form of state by using political arguments. In *Staat, Bewegung, Volk* (Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg, 1934), *Über die drei Arten des Rechtswissenschaftlichen Denkens* (ditto, 1934), and *Der Begriff des Politischen* (ditto, 1933), Schmitt offers a reasoned vindication of the corporate state. For him, as for all apologists for the unitary conception of the state, there is no independence of judicature, legislature, and executive; all dualisms, such as those of juridical and political, state and people, state and individual, *Verfassungsstaat* and *Verwaltungsstaat*, must be overcome. People, party and state achieve unity through leadership; and without this unity and leadership the concept of the political, which for Schmitt is the consequence of the "friend-enemy" antithesis, cannot assume any positive historical meaning; for the "enemy," whoever he may be, cannot be defeated if there is any division within the community. The functional interrelationship between the constitutive elements of the unitary state is an organic one, and the result is a military and militant strength realized in the identity of purpose as between leader and follower. Schmitt stresses the unitary and leader-conception of the state rather than the organic, but the two are inseparable from each other. "Each political unity required a consistent inner logic of its institutions and rules. It requires a unitary conception of form, which moulds every part of the public life unceasingly and without exception. In this way there is no normal state which is not a total state" (*Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, p. 33). "Total demands" belong to "all political leadership and decision" (*Staatsgefüge und Zusammenbruch des zweiten Reiches*, p. 23).

authority than any literary academy: it was the power of dictatorship applied to force into one mould the various activities of the mind: music, art, letters, drama. There can, therefore, be no foreign body in the national organism: all works smoothly, in unity, creating a definite national "style" in living and thinking. The political is the only form of human activity which counts.

That is one form of the organic state. It is quite clear that such an extreme form cannot throw much light on our organic democracy, in which the sovereignty of the state will be severely limited; the state should nevertheless encourage the development of the national tradition, and should discourage whatever cheapens and degrades the culture of the nation; recognizing, however, that only where there is freedom to create the bad can there be freedom to create the good. It is inconceivable, however, that the Press, in such a community, should be what it is now in great part: a snappy advertising medium appealing to the lowest common denominator, corrupting public taste, and existing for the purpose of enriching newspaper barons. The popular Press in its present form is not one of the most commendable aspects of British democracy, and sheds an unfavourable light on our educational system; the really excellent newspapers have a comparatively small circulation, and the existence of the intelligent weeklies becomes more precarious, the majority of them having already succumbed to the results of the decline in public intelligence. Although the regimentation of public opinion is not to be desired and should be avoided where possible as being inconsistent with democratic principles, the medium through which the people receives its information, and which plays such a considerable part in the formation of taste and judgment, cannot be a matter of indifference to a state bent upon developing in the national community the best qualities of appreciation and judgment. There is need for something on the lines of a *Kulturkammer* which can guide and develop values which enrich culture, something more than a censorship which is concerned only with what are believed to be offences against decency; for offences against taste can be no less harmful than offences against morals. A democratic society should be educated and discriminating in matters of taste, and the state as the organ of such a society should develop ways and means of ensuring, as far as it is possible to ensure, that the best, and not the worst, should be at the disposal of its citizens. There is, however, a great difference between the tyranny of Calvin's Geneva or of Puritan England and the state's concern with public taste, the relevance of which to education does not appear to have been adequately realized by politicians or educationists. Without making of itself a tyrant the democratic state should encourage in its citizens the appreciation of those qualities, both moral and æsthetic, which Saint Paul commended to the Philippian church,¹ and encourage more systematically the cultivation of what A. N. Whitehead has called "the habitual vision of greatness."

It is of importance to maintain that a democratic state with "form" or "style" should be an organic state; not a stratified one weakened and made ugly by tension between groups, but rather one in which classes or groups

¹ Philippians IV, 8.

shall have not so much an economic as a functional part to play.¹ The view that the state should be an organization controlled in the interest of any one class, whether middle, "working," or "upper," is both unjust and absurd; and those who advocate a "workers'" state because there are numerically more industrial than intellectual workers are guilty of error no less than those who argue that the state should be wholly directed by those who possess culture, lineage, or great wealth and landed interests. Even in Soviet Russia it has been found impossible to set up a purely "proletarian" republic; for in that country classes are in the process of evolution, though on a functional rather than on a social or economic principle. Yet even in a Socialist society doctors, engineers, research students and writers will not have the same kind of interests and therefore of social and economic standards as unskilled labourers or weavers or bricklayers.

Indeed, the greater part of our European culture has been the product of the middle class, as a glance at formative and creative personalities will show. Apart from occasional peasant art such as is found among the peasants of the Erzgebirge the "working" class has neither inspired nor created outstanding art or literature, and to an even lesser degree science.² This is not wholly due to the middle class being a so-called "leisured" class, for, with the exception of the small minority of its upper hierarchy, it works as hard as the industrial workers, and is such a valuable element in the community that it is not folly to suggest that the democratic state should show more interest in it than it does at present. For many years the middle class has been impoverished by taxation and is becoming less and less able, owing to financial stringency, to provide the cultural environment necessary to a nation which ought not to be satisfied with living by bread alone. The increased facilities for self-culture provided for the "working" class by middle-class tax-payers does not seem to have had the result of increasing the appetite of the working class for culture. Democracy remains mass-democracy and there is little evidence that in England (in Russia the situation appears to be very different—but Russia is not a democracy!) the masses are interested in the "public good" apart from their own economic advancement.

The "style" of a nation, given form by its intellectual, æsthetic, and moral standards, is not to be achieved haphazardly, and it is reasonable to suppose that there should be in an organic liberal-democracy a hierarchy or class of leaders as there is a class of teachers or scientists or administrators, all with their special training and equipment. It is curious that in one of the most important aspects of life, the political, the conduct of affairs should be left to those who fortuitously display aptitude for political activity. This has been recognized

¹ The modern identification of the "organic" state with the Fascist-Nazi-Communist form should not invalidate the idea of the state as an organic community. Such a good liberal as Señor Madariaga acknowledges that in some sense collective life is bound to be organic, but adds that the community has no right to make total demands. The "organic" conception of society needs to be corrected by a proper insistence on individual rights; otherwise "the state would be all, individual man not hing" (*Victors, Beware!* Cape, 1946, pp. 70 ff.).

² The question of peasants rising into the professions and becoming members of the intellectual class is another matter. Seldom have they any desire to remain members of a peasant class or to bring up their children according to peasant standards. People like the late Sir Henry Jones are exceptional figures, though Wales has more examples than England (in proportion to its population) of men of peasant origin becoming great preachers, scholars, or fine poets.

by Communists, Fascists, and by Plato in his *Republic*. People with such diverse outlooks as Hans Grimm, Salvador de Madariaga, T. S. Eliot, and Middleton Murry (all, incidentally, men of letters, not political philosophers) have in recent writings recognized the need for a leader-class, an "aristocracy" of worth and qualification, rather than of blood; the Nazis, however, were more logical than the democracies (though there is nothing undemocratic about the system) in providing *Fuhrerschulen* for the future governing hierarchy of the Reich. Apart from the civil service, the hierarchy which governs democratic states is not recruited by any special method, apparently relying upon general equipment, intelligence, and common sense in its members. An intelligent liberal-democracy should be capable of organizing some institution for the education of leaders of the community, so that representation on local bodies such as town or city councils should not be left to anyone whom the local political party nominates, but also to men of culture, knowledge, and wider competence; in other words, an aristocracy of worth.¹

The "form" of a civilization or a nation is not a matter of outward appearance only. A country covered by delightful and efficient housing estates or induced to live horizontally by deserting the house for the flat and adequately supplied with all the devices of modern technics might suffer from an inner formlessness and spiritual sterility, and love nothing better than what Mr. J. B. Priestley has called "twittering trivialities." Civilization, despite Spengler, is an affair of ideas more than of things; of outlook rather than technical achievement, however important the latter may be; and this emphasis on inner form should not be taken as a depreciation of the technical factor in civilization.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before
But vaster.²

¹ I am assuming that such education for political leadership should be based on the Christian conception of life. One cannot, of course, demand that the governing "aristocracy" should be professing Christians, though it would be better if they were. Yet a Christian state cannot be built upon any other understanding than that the framework within which the "political" operates should be in the main Christian. Even during the present century endeavours have been made to appoint prison governors whose outlook is Christian, and the record of colonial governors such as Lord Lugard and the late Sir Hubert Murray suggests that a Christian background can achieve much in promoting friendly relations between subject and ruling races. At present there may be enough diffused Christianity left to prevent this country from being avowedly pagan, and the great speech delivered by Mr. Baldwin to British Empire Youth in the Albert Hall before his retirement from politics, and Lord Halifax's address in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford in February 1940, are indications of the extent to which Christian principles colour the minds of older statesmen, though the gulf between them and the younger generation must be enormous. This one infers from the condemnation of Lord Halifax's speech by the economics—and socialism—obsessed students' congress which met in Leeds at the end of March, 1940. Sir Stafford Cripps, too, is a devout member of the Anglican Communion, and many of the members of the present Labour government (1945) are, or have been, local preachers. The disastrous course of events in Germany was precipitated by a hierarchy of leaders who had rejected Christianity or, who, as spiritual nondescripts, had arisen from a completely non-Christian background. The integrity of British politics is seen to be all the more conspicuous in this age in comparison with the corruption and irresponsibility of French politics before the war; few members of any modern French government had the moral outlook of British statesmen, and French politics were on the whole anti-clerical. Anglo-Saxon Protestantism has contributed immeasurably to the conception of politics as something to be taken seriously and which has a moral content. How long this will endure in a Britain which is becoming rapidly pagan one cannot foresee.

² Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, Intro.

For technics have their demonic potency. Because of the demonic character of the human mind it may be that the invention of the atomic bomb will have been the greatest disaster ever perpetrated by man. This, the most spectacular and terrifying product of the neotechnic age, may be the final judgment on man's cleverness and folly. We do not know. Its invention belongs to the same age and civilization as the mighty constructions of the Tennessee Valley Authority,¹ whose austere and beautiful functionalism is a happy combination of architecture, engineering, and æsthetic conception, and is a fine expression of the spirit of the neotechnic period with its feeling for economy and efficiency.

Yet technical efficiency may be soulless, and technical inefficiency is not compensation for a moral attitude and depth of feeling. The two elements should be combined in proper proportion if civilization is to achieve form and freedom from tension. For a civilized community is one which has achieved inner poise through the acceptance of common social, religious, and "cultural" values. This does not mean that there should be uniformity, or that new standards should not be created. Civilization is not necessarily (as Spengler has insisted) a formerly dynamic culture having expanded and become static. There can be change without tension, civilization without sclerosis, the emergence of the new without a savage destruction of the old, even though history has on so many occasions taken the latter form.

It is of the utmost importance that the Western nations, which have hitherto, during the modern period, been the mainspring of historical movement, should achieve the inner poise which is the result of the attainment of form or style. Too much has been seen in our generation of what the Fascist powers proudly called "historical dynamism" to make one desire any more of it. Perhaps such dynamism, however, if some care to regard history as a dialectical process, is a necessary, though, it is hoped, not a permanent element in the mechanism of progress and the emergence of new forms. To regard it as such may easily become a philosophical justification for all unruly and disruptive outbursts. But it is essentially destructive of political form and of culture, and is in this way nihilistic rather than demonic. It is a curious historical fact, however, that the Anglo-Saxon communities, and others which have to some extent adopted their political forms, have not been sources of this demonic-disruptive energy. Even the English Civil War was a mild affair compared with its contemporary, the Thirty Years' War, which devastated central Europe. It produced nothing resembling the sack of Magdeburg, and the American Civil War, though fought with bitterness, was not fought with savagery. Its leaders were Protestants and democrats by tradition and by temperament and were not inflamed by the fanaticism of either the Catholicism or the South-European temperament which made the Spanish Civil War such a barbaric conflict. The Anglo-Saxon states and those whose political systems they have influenced have much that they can teach the rest of the world.

It matters, therefore, very greatly, whether the "Western" nations (by which I mean the British Commonwealth, the United States, France, the Low Countries, the Scandinavian lands, and Czechoslovakia—the South American Republics are far too unstable to be included) become totalitarian and pagan

¹ See Dr. Julian Huxley's monograph on the T.V.A.

in outlook, or whether they reach political and cultural form of which the component elements are inner harmony, tolerance, religion, and an appreciation of the highest achievements of that humanism which is the combined legacy of Palestine, Greece, and Rome. This should deeply influence the conception of nationhood and of the behaviour of states towards one another. Education for free, responsible, organic-liberal-democracies, led by men who are spiritually alert and actuated by a profound devotion to the task of creating a humane society, should be one of the chief aims to which the Western nations should set their hand; that is, the production of "open" national communities within the larger framework of an international world-community, the building up of which should be the result of their leavening influence.

CHAPTER II

FREEDOM IN A PLANNED SOCIETY

I

THE argument of this book has so far been as follows:

Beginning with the search for meaning, which is the problem presented by history as distinct from historiography, we are led to inquire when "universal history" has been arrived at, and to analyse the factors which go to "make" history and civilization. The present situation, representing a major cross-roads, would appear to be an example of the "senseless" character of a great crisis precipitated by the operation of demonic or irrational elements which prevent civilization from reaching a state of world-unity, while at the same time making inevitable the realization by nations of their common destiny. The present crisis can be made intelligible only by seeing it as a form of judgment, literally "crisis" in the original meaning of the word, on a political neutrality which reflects moral weakness. As this situation is not only a problem for politics, but also for civilization, the manner of the spread of civilization of cultural values was analysed, and democracy given its place in this process as one of the vehicles of the diffusion of certain moral-political ideals, such as rights, liberty, and responsibility. But is democracy really capable of being the conservator of values? Its record during the inter-war years suggested rather the opposite; but, it was maintained, democracy can conserve them by recovering the spiritual basis which was its original inspiration. In other words, democracy must cease being a purely quantitative element in politics and must realise its own essentially qualitative nature. It must be more than the exercise of sovereignty through the counting of heads: it must rediscover its spiritual foundations.

The second part was concerned with the relation of politics to ethics (for the present state of civilization is a problem for ethics as well as for politics), particularly to what has been called "Utopianism." Democracy, having as its basis a particular conception of man, is the most "Utopian" form of political theory, for politics is inspired by ideals as well as conditioned by realities.

A possible form which democratic society might take, after having recovered its spiritual foundation, was suggested, leading to the conception of an "open" society which democracy alone is capable of producing, and which could be regarded as a Christian as well as a democratic order.

So far freedom and self-government, being two constitutive elements of an enlightened democracy, have been considered ideologically. It is necessary, however, to approach them not only as notions which can be defended philosophically and theologically by relating them to some transcendental principle, but in relation to the patterns of life of this present age; for in the kind of society which will most probably emerge they will occupy a position different from that which they filled in the old liberal society before the outbreak of the Second World War. For the practicability of democratic ideals, as well as their validity as political impulses at any given time, depends upon the social-political situation which is their conditioning framework. "Liberty" in an age dominated by the idea of functional planning will not be the same as during the heyday of *laissez-faire* liberalism; nor does it mean the same thing to the democrat as to the anarchist. To some it might seem that a technocratically ruled society might be the antithesis of a democracy, for the requisite knowledge would be concentrated in a small group of experts possessing the power to plan a community according to their own conception of its needs.

It will be necessary, therefore, to consider how far liberty is compatible with large-scale planning, which will undoubtedly be the method of re-ordering the world's resources in the not very remote future.

2

The present age is one of colossal breakdown, for the economic and political systems of the liberal and post-liberal ages have crashed in the catastrophic crisis which has overwhelmed mankind during the latter years. This crisis has been precipitated by the advent to power of men with the mentality of intelligent brigands and equipped with the latest of lethal technical devices, in such a way as to make it quite plain that there has been no moral development corresponding with man's ability to invent and use complicated tools. Dr. Karl Mannheim, formerly professor of sociology at the University of Frankfurt, has described this radical failure to reach adjustment in terms of the contrast between two rationalities: "functional rationality" and "substantial rationality," understanding by the former the more technical process such as the organization of resources with a definite purpose in view and by the latter the "capacity to act intelligently in a given situation on the basis of one's own insight into the inter-relation of events."¹ Functional rationality does not necessarily lead to the latter; rather has the course of events in the modern period led one to the opposite conclusion; and where the two fail to achieve proper balance a crisis of disintegration is inevitable. Functional rationality, or a planned order, however, has come to stay, for it is an inevitable precondition of the adequate utilization of the technical and natural resources of the modern world if want and economic maladjustments are to be banished.

¹ K. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, Paul, 1940, pp. 51 ff.

Dr. Mannheim, like Señor Ortega y Gasset, is deeply concerned about the impact of mass-democracy on culture, and because he believes in democracy and at the same time in the inevitable necessity for planning in order to overcome the lack of co-ordination in present day society, it may be of some assistance in our task of estimating the possibilities of democracy in the post-liberal age if we dwell briefly on the social analysis offered by so distinguished a sociologist.

Mass-democracy, he points out, has arrived, and because many of the impulses behind it are irrational, it is fraught with great potential danger. While creating a whole series of actions which are rationally calculable to the highest degree, a large-scale industrial society is likely to produce at the same time all kinds of emotional outbreaks which are characteristic of "amorphous human agglomerations." This antinomy lies at the root of modern society, and calls for a proper solution, for unless it can be resolved, society will disintegrate because of the explosive forces demanding liberation. "Mass democracy opens the door to irrationalities in those places where rational direction is indispensable." The significance of this is illustrated by the mass-appeals of Fascism and Communism in which this irrational element has been exploited to the full. It is particularly true, one may observe, of inter-war German society and of Republican Spain; and if Ortega is to some extent right in maintaining (in his essay on Mirabeau) that demonic potencies are necessary to move the huge machine of history, it should be remembered that such potencies harbour destructive powers as well as positively directive forces. They are now so easily roused that the enormous technique at the disposal of those who wield power can transform them into weapons of unlimited revolutionary power whose impact on civilized values can be disastrous. Democracy in its mass-form can indeed be induced to serve and to further the power of socially destructive elements. The man with the "hand-cart" mentality possessing an aeroplane loaded with bombs is the picture Dr. Mannheim uses to crystallize his conception of the danger involved in this phase of modern social organization. It is impossible, he says, to foresee the fate awaiting public morality if the mob gets hold of the secret which has hitherto overwhelmed small leading groups, and once the acceptance of violence has become a principle of social morality, the fruits of the discipline imposed by "long moral training" in the sphere of labour will be destroyed. No doubt he is writing with the German experience fresh in his mind, for elsewhere Dr. Mannheim would seem to exclude the more centralized and older democratic societies of France and Britain from the eventual process of the disintegration of mass-democratic society. It is, however, not the masses who are the determining factor so much as the élite which leads them, for they do little more than take their ideas from the controlling group. The question of the production of an élite (*cf.* Madariaga's "hierarchy") is therefore of prime importance for the formation of social patterns.

So far Dr. Mannheim has stated in another way the point of view expressed in Ortega's analysis of the masses in revolt. Where he goes beyond him is in endeavouring to reconcile the substantial irrationality of a purely statistical mass-democracy with the demands of a functionally rationalized society, and this is a major problem from which one cannot exclude the ethical nature

of politics referred to above, but which, lying outside the sphere of Dr. Mannheim's analysis, is not touched upon by him.

Since the advance of the technical control of economic life, then, liberty cannot mean quite the same as during the old, pre-planning period of society. Countries with liberal and democratic traditions can intervene decisively in this mass-age by using those traditions with greater wisdom than that exhibited by the dictators. "True liberalism in our collective age must act as a supplement, suggesting every type of planning and social technique which is likely to foster individuality, and must not obtain order at the cost of freedom."¹ The most important part of Dr. Mannheim's book deals with planning for freedom, a phrase which at first sight, as he would admit, has the appearance of paradox. But it is in relation to planning, that is to synthesis, as well as to ochlocratic, and ultimately dysgenic, tendencies, that the concept of freedom to-day has to be examined. If the balance between breakdown and a totally centralized regimentation, between freedom and completely "centralization," is to be maintained, it can only be achieved through re-thinking the nature both of democracy and planning. The two must be seen to be not incompatible, for the former, involving freedom and responsibility, is an essential form of civilized life, and the latter has come to stay. There must, as Dr. Mannheim says, be "freedom on the level of planning." But if there is to be planning, it must be on the level of freedom. The problem will then be so to manipulate the various kinds of social controls as to realize the maximum amount of freedom, or even to make them the instruments of a democratic society. Human freedom need not be extinguished on reaching the stage of mass-society: on the contrary, it is here that it is most needed in order to counteract the tendency of the mass-society to be moved by forces which make for rigidity of mind and taste, and to give a strong basic direction to its movement. Dr. Mannheim is quite emphatic, however, in holding that only when the character of contemporary social changes is properly understood will it be possible to arrive at a reasonable conception of the character of future democracy.

3

With these considerations in mind we proceed to an examination of the relation of planning to freedom, beginning with a brief inquiry into the nature of planning.

"Planning," Dr. Mannheim says, "does not mean rule by arbitrary forces over the living body of society, nor the dictatorial attempt to supplant creative activity. Planning means a conscious attack on the sources of maladjustment in the social order on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the whole mechanism of society and the way in which it works."² "We speak of planning and planned thinking when man and society advance from the deliberate invention of single objects or institutions to the deliberate regulation and intelligent mastery of the relationships between these objects."³ The practical execution

¹ Ibid., p. 264.

² Op. cit., p. 114.

³ Ibid., 152. See, further, his *A Diagnosis of our Time*.

of this systematized, scientifically co-ordinated policy would, of course, be the antithesis of the unplanned, unco-ordinated growth of nineteenth century "liberal" capitalism, to which a substantial return is highly unlikely; and in view of the background against which democratic freedom to-day is being examined, one is driven to conclude that the emergence of mass-society, the product, chiefly, of nineteenth century industrialism, has made necessary the social control of economic forces. It is clear, also, that liberalism in the old restricted sense will lead not to order but to disintegration and acute social embarrassment. This has been admitted even by those whose political outlook is predominantly liberal, signal examples being the authors of such collective demands for a planned economic order as *The Next Five Years*,¹ the *Report on Social Justice and National Reconstruction*² and the early programme of *How to Conquer Unemployment*, by Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Lothian, and Mr. Seebohm Rowntree. These documents are significant as being the work of groups of men of chiefly liberal turn of mind who have recognized the inability of unplanned action to deal with the social and economic problems of our time. The purpose of such planning, however, is clearly not the achievement of total co-ordination but the application of system, foresight, and the perception of social and economic needs in order to reduce anxiety due to want and fear of unemployment, and also to utilise to the maximum degree of efficiency, the economic resources of the country. The question, therefore, is not whether there should be any planning in a democratic society, but how much and of what kind, for it is universally admitted that *laissez-faire* as a policy is dead, and that a policy of intelligent integral co-ordination must take its place. Such is the condition of the world at present and so great is the destruction of capital values that private enterprise will be unable to deal with the problems of reconstruction. The concentration and redistribution and the re-creation of industry will be the responsibility not of individuals but of the state.

The theoretical difficulty in the way of realizing a free democracy within a planned society would appear to consist in the inevitability of oligarchic and bureaucratic control; for public opinion, in its present state, is incapable of making far-reaching decisions in specialized matters of large-scale planning, just as it is unqualified to make decisions in matters of foreign policy. It has not the necessary information at its disposal. This, of course, is an argument which might go some considerable way towards discrediting democracy in principle, and has been used as such by those who, for other reasons, dislike the idea of democracy. It is, however, true that, in countries which have in one form or another adopted planning as a definite policy, the popular will (unless mystically regarded as being expressed in the decisions of the ruling oligarchy) has little to say in the matter; in fact such "will" is usually over-ruled, as for example in the collectivization of agriculture during the First Five Year Plan in the U.S.S.R. Indeed, it is questionable if, from the standpoint of the counting of heads, or votes, Communism ever had the support of the majority

¹ *The Next Five Years: an Essay in Political Agreement*, Macmillan, 1935.

² Issued by the Council of Action for Peace and Reconstruction, May, 1938, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Walter Layton. The Liberal Party's report *Britain's Industrial Future* (1929) urged the formation of an economic general staff.

of the population of Russia, though in 1937, ninety-four per cent of it was engaged in government enterprises, as against twenty per cent in 1928. The Collectivization of agriculture was carried through in opposition to the popular will, that is to the will of the majority of those who were actually engaged in farming; the "freedom" of the peasants was ruthlessly overridden in the interests of a doctrinaire planning-policy. That this policy may have justified itself in the meantime does not make the manner in which it was executed any more defensible, though the Russian peasants will no doubt have been conciliated by the concessions made to them by the 1936 Constitution. The fact that the wheat-producing capacity of Russia has increased by fifty per cent does suggest, however, that the Central Planning Commission was better acquainted with the needs of the U.S.S.R. than the vast mass of the population which, in a democratic state, would have had a free vote; and this being so, such a revolution, ultimately beneficial, could only be carried through in violation of what are commonly understood to be democratic principles.

In Nazi Germany the economic machine was made completely subordinate to the requirements of *Wehrwirtschaft* (war-economy), and the regulation of the Labour Front left little freedom either to capital or labour. This kind of total planning for the purpose of waging war with the maximum intensity, however, cannot be regarded as a normal form of planning at all, for the aim of planning is the increase of the welfare of the community, not the plunging of it into an engineered crisis. Such a conception of planning cannot be compatible with democracy, nor can its continental expansion under the guise of a New Order.

If one therefore conceives planning as a policy the purpose of which is to increase the awareness of the individual through systematically raising the level of his material existence, one cannot say that *as such* it is necessarily undemocratic; whether it is so or not depends upon the purpose behind it and the manner of its execution. If the form of planning one has in mind is an all-in state enterprise which rules out the exercise of individual initiative, the freedom of the group which has hitherto been allowed to employ such initiative is naturally limited; but the freedom of the average person is not necessarily infringed when a state-planning commission decides that a certain thing should be done, or when it projects a scheme of industrialization, or intensifies large-scale agriculture. The opposition which is thought to exist between the two is largely theoretical, and that only when the kind of planning meant is of such a total character that the citizen is likely to become a cog in the planned state-machine.

If it is maintained, however, that all planning "from above" involves doing something which limits the so-called sovereignty of the "people," in so far as it involves activity in which the "people" is unable to participate, or which it cannot directly control, the reply may be given, that, in a liberal-democratic planned society a government would be unwise if it executed ambitious planning projects without taking the "people" into its confidence, or if it failed to educate its citizens in the principle of a new kind of social control. If planning from "above" can be willed from "below," all the better; if not, the measures taken should be, and doubtless would be, in a democratic state evolving into planned community, considerate and humane. There

would be no need, for example, to repeat in Britain the terrible procedure of expropriation which accompanied the process of collectivization in the U.S.S.R. The transition from an unplanned to a planned economy should be gradual, not revolutionary, and would be accompanied by legal safeguards.

4

But, one is justified in asking, for what kind of freedom should we plan? One answer is that the main object should be to realize the freedoms about which President Roosevelt spoke in his Message to Congress on 6th January, 1941, including freedom from want and from fear; things which cannot, in this modern world, be achieved without intelligent planning, not only on a national scale but on a world scale; that is on such a scale that world-history can truly be said to have arrived. "Want" has been caused by an inadequate manipulation of the earth's resources, unplanned and unco-ordinated (that is, atomistic-autarkic) currency-systems, devaluation for the purpose of capturing foreign markets, over-production and under-production, going off the gold-standard, tariffs and quotas: all having repercussions on somebody somewhere. An international economy based on reason can only be made effective through careful planning, and even though such a task would be a test of almost super-human ability, it should not be beyond the wit of man to devise a proper system. Difficulties are easily swept away in time of war; resources are pooled and planned, and currency barriers are overcome. What is possible in war-time should not be impossible in times of peace. If it is necessary to make inroads on liberty in order to do this, they should be made; for security, employment, and peace should be the first responsibility of any executive concerned not with the maintenance and exercise of power but with the welfare of the nation. Roosevelt's freedoms embody the fundamental rights to which man is entitled as man; but they cannot be realized through haphazard economic activities or political-economic autarky; for these things are already doomed.

The question sometimes arises: Who shall plan the Planners?¹ There is, of course, no answer to such a question, for personality is incalculable, and people with a strong democratic tradition will not tolerate the manufacture of human beings according to a preconceived pattern. In any case, the production of an élite, especially during the era of mass-democracy, is a difficult problem. If the élite is not to be an aristocracy of blood, it must be one of achievement, and this will necessitate its emergence from the ranks of the people, as has been to a great extent the case in Russia. The more important question, therefore, is Who shall plan those who produce the planners? to which the answer is again elusive, though the reply which might be most satisfactory is that the quality of whoever does the planning is ultimately a question of character and culture as well as ability.

It is by its fruit that the tree is known. There is no hard and fast method of ensuring that men will ever desire the right thing, or want it when they recognize it, nor can one devise any means which will enable them to choose

¹ Cf. Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, and Mannheim, *op. cit.*

infallible planners, or to be infallible planners when chosen; the people, moreover, cannot always be depended upon, even in the older democratic countries, to choose those who will best represent their interests. The *demos*, therefore, and the planning oligarchy, should work in harmony. The moralist, interested in politics as an aspect of ethics, would say that only by creating good men can a good system be built, and the Christian would go further, as has already been maintained in these pages, and say that only a Christian people can be relied upon to produce a satisfactory society which will in all circumstances place the rights of personality first. In fact, only spiritual freedom can fully guarantee political freedom; and behind the yearning for freedom from want and freedom from fear should lie not a selfish horror of them but a positive concern for their abolition in order that all may enjoy the fullness of life.

As for freedom from want (planning does not guarantee freedom of speech: it must be the duty of the planners to permit it), the picture of the inter-war world has not been a happy one. Goods have been available, but many have not been able to buy them; the plant has been there, but it has lain idle, and in a land of plenty there has been abysmal poverty. Where there has been eagerness to work the economic life of the country has not been so ordered as to make use of it. In 1924 the percentage of British miners unemployed was only 2.3 per cent; by 1932 it had risen to 34 per cent, and though by 1937 it had fallen to 14 per cent, such a dismal picture of one of our greatest industries does not encourage one in the belief that industry when left to itself will automatically provide the solution to its own problems. In South Wales, one of the districts hardest hit by the world slump, a live community with its own indigenous culture was allowed to rot. Only 40 per cent of the boys who left school in 1935 were able to find work in South Wales, and as a result of the forced and haphazard emigration of the younger generation from the Glamorganshire valleys the thriving cultural life which once typified them has withered.

A similar story could be told about British agriculture, though the dereliction is not so conspicuous. Between 1921 and 1937 the number of men employed on the land fell from 996,000 to 741,000: a serious decline in one of our basic industries. Sir John Orr estimated that 70 per cent of the population was receiving no more than 30 shillings per head per week, and 50 per cent less than 20 shillings. These are but a suggestion of the amount of re-ordering of the economic life of the nation if freedom from fear and want are to become realities. Such a condition of things was due in great measure to what are called "world causes;" this, however, is not a satisfactory method of explaining it, for it implies a kind of determinism which defies the use of reason, whereas the aim of planning is to remove these "world-causes" of depression by making the best systematic use of the industrial resources of the world. To accept passively a state of things which is remediable by the exercise of foresight, knowledge, and skill, is equivalent to admitting that the human situation is incapable of solution. As long as man is thought to be at the mercy of an unregulated process which involves him in its inescapable operations it is nonsense to speak of freedom; for freedom is as much a form of control over environment as it is a metaphysical concept. Even though he may believe

that all men are born free, that democracy represents not only high social obligation but actual concrete rights which can be empirically enjoyed, a man is not free as long as he is dominated by the fear of unemployment and malnutrition. During the inter-war years few industries were started in depressed areas, and fine industrial plants erected not many years previously were allowed to become derelict. Private enterprise was unable to deal with the situation, which was exaggerated and made incurable without radical treatment on a world-scale by the growth of autarky in other countries. Just as conditions in unplanned democracies have led people to question the very foundations of democracy, so in the wider world have the rights of national sovereignty been challenged; each has led to economic disorder, fear, and poverty. The real object of criticism, however, should not have been democratic government as such but the inertia of those who imagined that they were still living at a time when the state was considered to be more or less neutral towards industry, whereas in the modern world politics, economics, and the social services are all the concern of a state which is rapidly assuming responsibility for control and not merely for administration.

Ultimately it is to contribute to the realization of freedom of the spirit in the fullest sense that planning should be designed; and it would appear that without the complete utilization of all natural resources this will not be achievable. It is true that man does not live by bread alone, but this does not mean that he does not need bread; while denying the absolute primacy of the material over the spiritual, one should not ignore or neglect the material basis of life, without which there can be no such thing as civilization.

5

Democracy in a planned society should be politically and culturally awake, for a planned society, if the planning is directed towards the encouragement and broadening of human freedom, does not presuppose dictatorship either by the mass-man, or by the technocratic oligarchy; it implies, in the last analysis, participation by the people in the benefits of the planning policy of which they approve. "Total" planning is, of course, non-democratic; for it would mean the use of every device at the disposal of the planners for the purpose of directing and controlling the citizen's mental and spiritual as well as his economic life. But can there be a planned society which is not total in its scope? What are the limits of planning?

These questions, which are bound to occur, have to some extent been already answered by referring to documents advocating a planning policy for Britain within a democratic framework and which show that the economic life of a country can be planned on liberal-democratic principles if the character of the purpose is clearly recognized. The only kind of government which could be tempted to use its power to impose a completely uniform pattern of life on the community would be one which set out to maintain itself as the executive of a dictator-class or group, or which deliberately intended to organize for war. Either of these will be difficult to imagine during the present post-war period, for the meaning of "class" will have changed and planning will be

for peace and world reconstruction, not for war. In any case, neither of them can be considered likely in English-speaking communities with a democratic tradition.

The compatibility of freedom with planning depends therefore on the aim of the planning, on the incorporation in it of a liberal-democratic tradition (in the widest sense), the continuance of free parliamentary discussion, the wise use of authority in framing an educational system designed to transform a statistically conceived mass-democracy ("counting of votes") into a qualitative democracy with sound judgment and a sense of values, educated for the right use of freedom and the exercise of responsibility. It depends, too, on the emergence of an élite, a leadership, which is not concerned primarily with the exercise of power for its own sake but with the promotion of public welfare and the maintenance of good international relationships based on orderly co-operation. This will involve, like all other methods of government which do not rely on the direct plebiscite, government by oligarchy, for in any system there must be delegated executive authority. In the progress of our democratic planned society a lead will have to come from the political élite, from those who have legislative and executive power, rather than from the public, which will not be sufficiently qualified to decide the details of political issues.

A planned state need not be an omniscient state, though it will have a great part of the life of the community under its direction and control, and while dealing with the multifarious aspects of national life it must at the same time be instrumental in creating a system which will encourage the free cultural and spiritual development of all its citizens.

"Our dominant aim is to secure that all share in the benefits of this new age of potential plenty. That is not an end which can come of itself. Left uncontrolled, the jungle forces existing in human nature will not ensure economic progress of this kind. Nor can we, in a democratically governed country, expect it to be given by the fiat of some benevolent despot. It must be the outcome of united action by the community as a whole, working through the government which is their representative and the embodiment of their will."¹

The document from which this quotation is taken recommends the setting up of a special Planning Committee of the Cabinet, of an Economic General Staff, various boards and commissions to deal with the planning of housing, national development, investment, and banking. There is nothing in such suggestions as these which conflicts with democracy, for they embody proposals for the institution of a form of political organization which should be capable of utilizing the resources available for man and at the same time offer him the freedom without which planning might become little more than a bare mechanical process.

6

The mechanism of planning is a technical matter which concerns politicians, economists, sociologists, and technicians. But the type and extent of the planning which is contemplated are to be judged in relation to the conception of human nature for the benefit of which planning is to be introduced.

¹ *Report on Social Justice and National Reconstruction*, p. 102.

Planning in the sense of national regimentation, as has been seen from the experience of totalitarian countries, is inseparable from a cynical view of human nature: one which considers man to be merely instrumental to the achievement of certain political ends. Planning, if carried to an extreme, results in a form of determinism which is quite contrary to the Christian conception of man as a free personality. If character and culture are in any degree the result of an economic system, it is clear that men will act and react differently and produce different social values under a system of rigid planning from what would be the case under a *laissez-faire* system. To consider human life as something which requires planning and control to the last detail is to take a view of it which no democrat can hold, for it is incompatible with the conviction that character is made through the actions and decisions of a free personality. Planning as a general principle may be demanded in order to save society from economic chaos; but planning as an economic doctrine or dogma to be applied rigorously to all possible situations is the expression of a mechanical view of man and society.

Further: if society is an organism composed of a variety of interdependent and mutually necessary parts or members, it is illogical to suppose that it can rightly cohere if left to its own devices. The modern world is so complicated, and its movements have to be regulated by such delicate mechanisms, that only through a large measure of centrally planned control can the adjustments be made which will relieve social and economic tension. The systematic co-ordination of the economic activities of nations would appear henceforth to be required by the necessities of the present world-situation, and the evolution of world-history as a unity cannot be conceived except in terms of policies which are designed to reduce anarchy and chaos in international situations both political and economic. Society as an organism cannot tolerate the proliferation of cells in such a way as to impair the smooth working of the body as a whole. This disease has been the cause of so many of our world-wide disorders in recent years.

The idea of a society, national and international, as an organism consisting of interdependent members is one which is most in conformity with the principles implied in New Testament Christianity. But more fundamental even than this is the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God in relation to His Creation, which implies that man must not be deprived of the fruits of labour. Over-supply and under-supply are incompatible with the Christian idea of the world, for they mean that man has mismanaged or abused for his own purposes the natural resources which God has provided. Any system therefore, which promises a fairer distribution and organization of the resources of the earth and of industry is contributing, on the secular plane, to the realization of a society which is nearer to the Kingdom of God than one which lives in a condition of injustice and semi-anarchy. The tendency in recent theology and religious thinking has been to find a theological as well as a political justification for planning.¹

¹ E.g., the transactions of the Malvern Conference, the Statement by the Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility entitled *Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction, The Churches and the Economic Order*. It is worth noting that Barth is in politics a Socialist, and that both Brunner and Tillich are anti-capitalist.

But this should not divert us from the more fundamental question of what is to be the character of the planners. It is not to be expected that those who assume power in the West, in the former Christian nations, will be pious Christians; and in the non-Christian lands such as Turkey and Japan and, possibly, China, though Christianity may prove to be a determining factor in her reconstruction and development, those who wield power and direct policy will not be conscious of any historical connection with an ancient Christian tradition. The relation of the principle of planning to a Christian form of life is therefore of more concern to the Christian West, and the present and future task of the Church is to create, or re-create, the Christian atmosphere which will influence the planners and their conception of planning. It may not yet be too late for Christianity to exercise a determining influence upon public and private life if it succeeds in discovering the right kind of strategy. The Churches, it is true, have no longer any political influence comparable with that exercised by the "Nonconformist conscience" during the last century and the beginning of the present one, and the great danger besetting them is that they may become little more than coteries of people who meet for pious exercises. That may be part of their historical destiny in this generation. But the fact remains, as Dr. Micklem has said, that all political problems are at bottom theological.¹ For every aspect of life which has to do with the deeper levels of human existence (because a conception of human nature is involved) comes within the scope not only of the Christian doctrine of man but of the doctrine of God. This is of course not true for the secular politician or social philosopher, but it is not with secular philosophy alone that we are concerned.

CHAPTER III

THE CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

I

BOTH Spengler and Berdyaev are of the opinion that Western Civilization has come to the end of its period of creativeness: the former because he sees in "civilization" the sclerosis of Faustian or Western culture, with its drying-up of creative impulses, and the latter because it is the culmination of a process of humanistic development which has led to an inhumanism having its source in the denial by the modern man of his spiritual nature and background. Professor Toynbee, too, seems to be convinced of the lack of creativeness apparent in the present state of civilization. In order, then, to conclude our inquiry into the relationship of democracy and civilization, we might as a preliminary step endeavour to discover what is the connection between creativeness and civilization and to ascertain whether, or when, a civilization ceases to be creative.

¹ N. Micklem, *The Theology of Politics*, p. xv.

2

History, according to Toynbee's analysis, has its genesis in a challenge-and-response-process by which society in a static condition is given movement by an external stimulus, such as changing climatic conditions, the search for food, or contact with a more virile society. If the society in question reacts positively it develops, and moves towards the state of life which is called civilization; if it fails to meet the challenge it either remains in an "arrested" condition or disappears. The genesis of civilization is dependent, namely, on the ability to meet a challenge and upon the initiative with which it is able to deal with it. It involves, in other words, some creative activity on the part of individuals or groups. Without this society would have remained in its primitive nomadic state; men would not have made the momentous advance from food-gathering to food-growing; they would not have invented tools and developed a technique for the purpose of making use of nature, nor would they have developed advanced social institutions. They would not have been able to lay the technical foundations necessary to the growth of civilization.

Now, once societies are on the way towards this organized life of which culture is the substance and civilization the form, advances are made through the impacts of creative spirits upon the historical movement. Without these creative spirits, or geniuses, history would not have proceeded and civilization would not have been reached. The consequences of such impacts may be so far-reaching that they may continue for generations and extend far beyond the limits of the immediate society to which the "genius" belongs. Thus the impact of Alexander of Macedon on his age had, through the expansion of Hellenism made possible by his conquests, an incalculable effect upon the course of subsequent world-history. Apart from the fact of conquest, which was itself a remarkable achievement, the Hellenization of the Mediterranean and the Near East, eventually contributing, during the second century B.C., to the "hardening" of Judaism, against which New Testament Christianity was a partial revolt, provided a *lingua franca* for the whole of that region embracing Roman administration and the area in which Christianity grew during its early days, and also the intellectual soil from which rose the neo-Platonic philosophy and the resultant intellectual ferment which it stimulated, leading, eventually, to the revival, many centuries later, of Greek studies without which the Western awakening at the time of the Renaissance would have been greatly impoverished. In so far as it is doubtful whether Greek culture of the classical age would have become a world-possession without the Macedonian conquests and their long chain of incalculable consequences, Alexander can be considered a creative "world-historical" figure of the first importance.

Again, the impact of Julius Caesar, an equally great genius, upon the Roman society of his time led to such a degree of expansion that the foundation was laid for a unified Western Europe embracing Britain, Gaul, Italy, Spain, and Western Germany. The heritage left to subsequent generations, which may be said to include the organization of the Roman Church, roads, Roman

law, and agriculture is not yet exhausted, in spite of the Germanic incursions into the Empire during the fifth and sixth centuries. The barbarians, though largely instrumental in the collapse of the Roman Empire, did not completely repudiate Roman civilization, nor did the medieval church allow them to destroy the social fabric which had been built up. The centres of German civilization during the Dark Ages were the ancient Roman settlements in the Rhineland and Western Germany, such as Trier, Cologne, and Frankfurt.

Examples like these can easily be multiplied, and when one examines the consequences of the impact of historical personalities on contemporary society, such as Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Cromwell, Lenin, and many others, it is impossible to give a simple answer to the question, When do the forces which they released cease being creative? for their momentum would appear to outweigh the original impulse, and prevents the separation of "cultures" into self-consistent and more or less isolated wholes; for one of the weaknesses of Spengler's morphology is that he makes little allowance for the interaction and overlapping of cultures. There cannot be a hard-and-fast "Winter," because one culture may be incorporated in the "Spring" of another, and the sap which has been static in the "Winter" rises and fills the tree again in the "Summer." The original momentum deriving from the historical creative impulse does not exhaust itself for a long time, and even when it has appeared to do so, as with classical Greek culture before the revival of learning, its recovery can be an inspiration to its further activity in a remote age.

Such are the conclusions to which a survey of historical movements of great significance leads us, and to that extent there is some truth in Carlyle's contention that history is the history of great men. But while bearing this in mind one should realize that there is a sense in which such moments can be said to exhaust themselves, especially in the domain of "culture" as distinct (broadly speaking) from that of "history" or action. Whereas the effects of the Macedonian conquests, or of the colonizing impulse of the Elizabethan period and after can be said to be continuous, though not necessarily regular or commensurate with the intensity of the causes, cultural periods are not subject to the same law of motion. For whereas the terms "finality" and "sublimity" cannot be applied to "historical" events, they are applicable to the achievements of culture-periods. In fact, the very continuity of the action of historical forces discourages the attribution of finality to them in the sense in which finality can be claimed for religion or art, for culture-periods are non-recurrent (though their influence continues or revives after a period of decay), whereas the "continuously effective power," as Goethe called it, of historical momentum is not so easily circumscribed. Its nature is different, for it is diffused and formless, whereas art is essentially a matter of form. It can be maintained, for example, that the expression of beauty in plastic form was achieved with finality in classical Greece; that the Bible represents finality in religion; that Medieval Europe reached finality in architectural beauty in the great Gothic cathedrals; that in painting and drama renaissance Italy and Elizabethan England respectively reached the final degree of the sublime which is unlikely to be surpassed; that Germany between 1750 and 1830 produced the high-watermark in music which will never again be reached, though there may be other high moments here and there. The pure art of

classical Greece,¹ the cathedrals of Medieval Europe, and the other examples mentioned, produce a degree of satisfaction which no other artistic creations arouse, and without in the least disparaging the lesser achievements, great as these may be, one can say with some confidence that these expressions of the sublime will not be surpassed.

In this sense it may be said that Western culture has exhausted itself and has ceased being creative on the grand scale; there is much evidence, for example, that it is the machine rather than creative art which is inspiring the younger generation with that æsthetic appreciation which would otherwise be directed to painting and music. Eugene O'Neill's play *The Dynamo* and some of the curious "pure" plastic designs of Henry Moore, Edward Wadsworth, and Brancusi are symbols of this tendency; Honegger's *Pacific* 231 and Mossolov's *Music of the Machines* (first performed in 1930), are further illustrations of the attempt to give æsthetic expression to the emotions roused by the contemplation of mechanical objects, though such experiments in the realm of music have not been often repeated. It would seem that civilization has been given its inner, its richest life, in the past, and that the contemporary and no doubt the future world will have to draw upon it in order to satisfy its imaginative and emotional hunger. In the sphere of values there is little more which can be said by man: he can draw upon those which have been revealed already and extend the orders of life over which they may be said to have jurisdiction. Each generation creates new artistic forms, but it does not therefore cease to absorb something of the sublime as created in the past; it can place itself in living organic relationship with the imaginative achievements of bygone ages. In this way the original creativity may be thought of as having taken place within a strictly circumscribed historical period, but its effect is neither so limited nor does it tend to dwindle in power as does the force arising from the impact of "world-historical" figures upon contemporary and subsequent society. A new generation, therefore, does not need to create its own imaginative life, though in practice it is always searching for new forms of expression; it can appreciate the imaginative experience of other ages without losing faith in itself because it is unable to reach their level, however excellent its own may be. One may argue with some force, incidentally, that the basis of true catholicity is the appreciation by the nations of the world of the high levels of each other's spiritual culture.

In discussing, therefore, whether Western civilization has reached its last and most uncreative period, we should give an answer first of all to the question: Does a non-recurrence of "classical periods" imply the exhaustion of the creative spirit? An affirmative reply would imply that creativeness is limited to the realm of values, of art, philosophy, and religion and that it cannot be considered as relevant to action and organization or to the social sciences. Our answer is that Western civilization has not necessarily ceased to be creative because man has passed through the "classical" ages of literary and artistic expression, for the present period of Western civilization may have a creative function of an entirely different kind to fulfil, namely, the political and economic reconstitution of the world which can only be envisaged when

¹ Mr. R. H. Wilenski (in *The Meaning of Modern Sculpture*) describes this idea of the finality of Greek Art as "the Greek prejudice."

the proper place is given to the technological character of modern life. This will depend far less, eventually, upon the dimensions of "world-historical" figures for its execution than earlier forms of creative activity, but it will depend upon political leadership, foresight, and genius. For it is through genius that the significant moments of history are born.

We will therefore look more closely at the relation between genius, creativeness, and civilization, before passing on to an estimate of the creative function of democracy in helping to give shape to the world which is in the process of being made.

3

New creative acts are the work of genius, in whom is added to the contemplative gift of the sage an inner irresistible energy which enables him to penetrate into the depths of things, a kind of dimensional faculty which is denied to the sage, and exemplified in St. Paul, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Beethoven, to name only a few of the most outstanding. Paul's analysis of the human spirit as found in his letters to the Romans and Corinthians, the curious awareness of Satanic powers which characterizes the sixth chapter of the letter to the Ephesians, his meteoric change from ruthless persecution to the utter dedication of himself to Christ and the early Christian communities, the violence of his conversion, his incurable restlessness, the height and depth of his emotions, all combine to provide a picture of a man whose immense energy and tremendous sweep of intellect place him in the front rank of creative geniuses, showing him to be creative in the realm of action as well as in the possession of what might be called an unusual degree of spiritual infection.¹ The almost terrifying range of Shakespeare's experience and vision as seen in the great tragedies, particularly in *King Lear*, shows in an uncanny degree how a great genius can penetrate in imagination into the last profundities of sin and evil. The true measure of his genius can be seen in comparison with the most brilliant "sage" of his time: Francis Bacon. In *King Lear* there is evidence of the untameability of one of the great creative minds, who are "tamed" only by subjugating the violence of their feelings to the necessities of literary and other artistic forms. Beethoven, too, possessed this spiritual violence to a remarkable extent. "His talent astounded me," said Goethe to Zelter; "unfortunately he has an utterly untamed personality." Not only the huge scale on which his Ninth Symphony was written, with the suggestion of vastness in the opening bars of the first movement, transformed into the exalted joyfulness of the last, the irresistible momentum and the "aufgeknöpfte" ("unbuttoned") mood of the beginning and the end respectively of the Seventh, but also many passages from Beethoven's own writings, bear testimony to the dimensional quality of his penetration. Such a document as the Heiligenstadt Testament, his letter to Wegeler in 1800 ("I shall seize Fate by the throat. It shall never get me down. How beautiful life is!");

¹ For an unusually stimulating study of this aspect of St. Paul's genius see J. C. Powys' fine essay in *The Pleasures of Literature* (1938). This is illuminating as coming from the pen not of a theologian but of a man of letters.

his conversation with Schösser, in which he described in detail the process of composition as it went on in his mind: these and other utterances illustrate the untamed grandeur of Beethoven's emotional and imaginative life.¹

Goethe's comments on the nature of genius are illuminating. In his conversation with Eckermann dated March 11, 1828, he expressed himself as follows:

"What is genius but that productive power whereby deeds originate which show themselves before God and Nature and therefore have results and are permanent. All Mozart's works are of this kind; there is in them a creative power (*eine erzeugende Kraft*), which continues from one generation to another without being exhausted and consumed. The same is true of other great composers and artists. How Pheidias and Raphael have affected the succeeding centuries, and Durer and Holbein too. . . . Luther was a genius of a very significant kind: his activity is still with us, and we cannot yet foresee those times in which he will not be influential. . . . For, as we have already said, there is no genius without continuous productive power; and furthermore, it does not matter in the least what is one's business, or one's art, or one's profession."²

The significance of creativeness cannot escape observation in any attempt to estimate the forces which make cultures and determine the nature of the world's great historical events. Little imagination is required to realize how poor the world would be without Alexander of Macedon, Augustus, Napoleon, Abraham Lincoln, to name a few men of action, and the author of the *Book of Job*, Goethe, Beethoven, Pheidias, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Edison, and scores of others who have stood out from their fellows by virtue of their creative gifts. Even where genius has led to destruction, or where "vaulted ambition, which o'erleaps itself and falls on the other side," seems to reverse the career of a genius, mankind is never the same after that meteoric appearance. Napoleon will undoubtedly be always considered one of the greatest historical geniuses, for his impact on the life of Europe was so immense, and his profound demonic character will never cease compelling people to ask questions about the meaning, if there be any, discoverable in the appearance of men of destiny. It is the geniuses, the great creative spirits, whose work has so enriched the sum total of civilized life and added to our awareness of the unlimited range within which the mind of man operates. The genius does, usually (though this statement cannot in the same sense be applied to political genius) create something out of nothing; he gives birth to a new thing. "Creativeness," says Berdyaev, "is always a growth, an addition, the making of something new that had not existed in the world before," adding, however, that the "problem of creativeness is the problem as to whether something completely new is possible. Creativeness from its very being is bringing forth out of nothing. Nothing becomes something, non-being becomes being."³

It is in the realm of art and letters that this is illustrated at its best. A Mozart symphony was a new thing. The notes which Mozart's genius "arranged" in imagination during his coach-journey to Prague were tones which can exist in the mind of anyone; the intervals at which they were used

¹ Cf. further Beethoven's words to Lichnowsky (1805): "Prince! What you are, you are through accident. What I am, I am through my own efforts. There are princes, and there will be thousands of princes more, but there is only one Beethoven." "With men who do not believe in me because I am not yet famous I cannot associate." (To Lobkowitz, 1795.)

² J. P. Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, vol. II, p. 10.

³ *The Destiny of Man*, Bles, p. 162.

were not "new" in the sense that Mozart's note-relationship was not theoretically available to any other composer of his time; the symphonic form, as he used it, was not original, though he enriched it; but the *Prague* Symphony was nevertheless a new creation. So was Michelangelo's figure of David, though he did not have to "create" the medium out of which it was made. *King Lear* and *Paradise Lost* were new creations in the sense that they had never existed before and contained an emotional and intellectual dynamic which outlived their creators.

In so far as God, for the Christian, is Creator, it is not making too great a leap to assume that the philosopher and the theologian are justified in finding in creativeness some indication of the purpose of God in history. The late Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, for example, was convinced that there is an organic connection between God's creative work and the work of genius.¹

It is the poets and artists who are most instrumental in interpreting the world; but it is not interpreters alone but the men of action, the Alexanders and Napoleons, who have *made* history, geniuses in the political as well as in the aesthetically creative sphere. It is the function of the political genius, releasing, harnessing, and directing latent forces so as to give empirical effect to what had previously existed only as an imaginative vision.

Can it be said that a political genius is truly creative as is the man of letters or the artist? Is revolution, which is the most violent form of interference with the historical movement, as constructive as it is destructive or more so? It is, perhaps, impossible to say whether contemporary movements are in the highest sense creative: the verdict must be left to the judgment of future generations, who alone will be able to survey them from a distance and to perceive and assess their real significance in the light of succeeding events. Napoleon's plan for the unification of Europe under French hegemony might, for him, have been a creative idea; but for those whose fate was to be "united" his ambition was a purely destructive one, even though the imposition of the Napoleonic Code upon the Italian republics gave to the Italians a foretaste of more liberal legal reforms which would have been highly unlikely without Napoleon's invasion of Italy. By 1816, however, Europe was much as it had been before the Napoleonic wars: the Bourbons were once again on the French throne, and the frontiers of France were reduced to their pre-war limitations. The main result was that France ceased once and for all to trouble Europe. On the other hand Metternich replaced Napoleon as the European bugbear, reaction was strengthened by the Holy Alliance, and Prussia's awakening was brought about by resistance to French pressure. Napoleon was undoubtedly a genius; but even the ideas of a genius can be defeated by a coalition too powerful to be overcome in such a way as to cancel his initial creative achievements. The same may be true of Hitler, though at present it is impossible to foresee what the eventual condition of Europe will be like. That Hitler was in many ways a creative force for Germany cannot be denied. There could have been much good in the Nazi reconstruction of the German state had it not been for the strange character of Hitler's demonic nature and the streak of brutality in the German soul. Nazi Germany, however, determined to destroy, to be nihilist, and the destruction wrought

¹ *The Living God*, Oxford, p. 357.

has immeasurably exceeded the amount of reconstruction achieved during the earlier years of the Nazi regime.¹ The impact, even in destruction, of Nazi Germany upon the world has been so terrific, so explosive, that defeat will not completely negative the consequences of the release of such revolutionary power. It may be (though this is pure speculation) that, as though by a dialectic process, the very atavistic nature of Nazi demonism will have led to the unification of Europe for the main purpose of avoiding once and for all the recurrence of such a catastrophe. This, however, is doubtful, for history does not show that nations have profited by whatever lessons the history of the past has had to offer, and in any case such unification will not be the result of Hitler's genius, but of opposition to all that he stood for. Had Hitler been satisfied with confining his activities to the reconstruction of the Reich instead of indulging in policies both negative and repulsive, he might well have been assured of a distinguished position among the great political geniuses of Europe; but it is doubtful if the historical judgments of the future will ever consider him to be more than a tactician of consummate skill and one of the curiosities of history, a man of criminal tendencies placed in power by an extraordinarily favourable set of circumstances, and driven onward by the destructive nature of his own *daimon*.

The East has produced two entirely different kinds of contemporary geniuses: Gandhi and Chiang Kai-shek, each of whom is "making" history in a different way, Gandhi by resisting non-violently what he considers to be the tyranny of British Imperialism, and Chiang by resorting to armed resistance to Japanese Imperialism. Each has been profoundly influenced by Christian ideas; one remains faithful to his national cultural heritage and religion, repudiating the ideals of the West; the other believes that only by adopting the ideals of the West can China be saved from westernized Japan, and adopting at the same time a non-indigenous religious faith. Whereas Gandhi stands for the independence of India by withdrawal, Chiang's policy is to rebuild China on Western lines, and by making use of all the organization and technical advances available. Each of these two great twentieth century figures is creative in a different way, and the life of each will be a turning point in the history of his own people. Neither is a "man of destiny" in the Napoleonic sense or in the sense in which Hitler believed himself to be the agent of a Divine Providence, perhaps because Western man is by nature more dynamic than the Oriental. Situations do call forth men of genius (Lenin was one) who at other times and in other places might have passed their lives in obscurity, and they act in turn upon the situation. They make and are made at the same time. This interaction of men and situations is, as has been suggested earlier, the main source of historical movement: without it the world would have become static, and creative forces would not have been released.

Both in the æsthetic and in the political spheres, then, creative action is a constantly recurrent phenomenon, and because it is recurrent, and because it is an unsuppressible function of human nature, it is reasonable to suppose that, whatever form it takes, it is, fundamentally, something which is related to the very nature of life itself. Berdyaev describes it as the "process of inter-

¹ For accounts of the constructive work of the Nazis see Stephen Roberts, *The House that Hitler Built*, 1937, and Berndt and Schrötter, *Gibt mir vier Jahre Zeit* (Munich, 1937).

action between grace and freedom, between forces going from God to man and from man to God." Genius is the "image of God the Creator in man."¹ One would hesitate to accept the latter statement in any literal sense, except in so far as creativeness in man is a reflection of creativeness in God, though this would require such obvious qualification as might make it almost meaningless; but if history is conceived as a dynamic, or let us say kinetic, process, deriving its impulse from the interaction of exceptional individuals and situations, and if, as we have contended, history without purpose is meaningless, and therefore impossible to explain, some creative impulse is inevitable if stagnation is to be avoided. Spengler, whose outlook was in many ways thoroughly pessimistic, believed that there would be no more creative impulse in Western civilization, which had already exhausted its creativeness. But with the cessation of creativity history would have no momentum to carry it forward, and as it is incredible that mankind is approaching a non-distant culmination of history, there is no reason for believing that the period of Spenglerian "winter," of sclerosis, has set in yet. In spite of the influence of Spengler on modern German political thought this decline of creative power would be repudiated, in theory, by the National Socialist revolutionaries, who appear to believe that the Third Reich was the only creative force in the Western world. A revolutionary party always believes itself to be creative, ignoring with wilful and fanatical blindness the values and forms which it has destroyed in order to substitute for them its own. That "nothing is created without something being destroyed; life is generated in blood" is the opinion of a writer in Signor Mussolini's paper, the *Popolo d'Italia*.² Such a statement may be nothing more than the bombast of a modern *condottiere* and typical of the highly coloured verbiage to which one has become accustomed; but on the other hand the writer may honestly believe (and in that case such a belief is dangerous and pernicious) that he is actually describing what takes place in the dialectic movement of history and defining the nature of any major political revolution which embraces not only the forms of administration but the whole culture of a community, including law, ethics, education, economics, and religion.

For revolution has both its positive and negative aspects: the pre-revolutionary era is superseded and the forms identified with it are destroyed, and a new era emerges and is superimposed. The Romanov empire collapses and the Soviets emerge; the Weimar Republic is undermined, and the Third Reich is constructed on quite different principles, though not ignoring the main trends of German political thought in the past. But even though the new state which replaces the old is new in the sense of repudiating the old and replacing its principles with those of the men who have brought it into being, the basic stuff is not new. An artist paints a picture, and creates something which was not previously there; a composer of music creates a symphony out of "nothing;" but the political genius does not "create" a new race; he does not even introduce entirely new political principles into the structure of the new life of the nation. Without Marx and other dialectical materialist philosophers of the nineteenth century (Feuerbach, Stirner, etc.) there would

¹ *The Destiny of Man*, Bles, p. 165.

² *The Manchester Guardian*, April 20, 1940.

have been no Leninist revolution; without Hegel, H. S. Chamberlain, Clausewitz, Treitschke and Nietzsche there would have been no Nazi revolution; the French Revolution owed much to Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and the American separationists; the English Civil War and the Cromwellian state arose out of the Protestant Reformation, which was at first a continental movement. Even the most commendable production of Nazi Germany, the Labour Service, was instituted under Dr. Brüning (on a voluntary basis), and the *Hitlerjugend* and the *Kraft durch Freude* were borrowed from the *Balilla* and *Dopolavoro* of Italian Fascism, which was a more original revolution than National Socialism. The political genius cannot create an entirely new political psychology which is alien to the traditional mentality of the people. What has happened in Germany has been the development of a political-philosophical tradition which is congenial to the German mind in its recent state of evolution, namely the reactionary ideas of the Prussian state associated with the political philosophy of Hegel as opposed to the Kantian type of thought rooted in the more humane background of the Enlightenment and emphasising the objective reality of right and justice.

Broadly speaking, however, the forms or associations within the framework of the totalitarian state are new, whereas the political philosophy inspiring the new conception of the state is rarely the creation of any one political genius, who, by means of strategy, the exigences of a particular historical situation which summons him to action, his flair for spectacular demagoguery, and the rare qualities of his personality, directs the forces which ultimately triumph over the old order. Circumstances do not to any great extent hinder an artist or musician or man of letters from expressing his thoughts or feelings, nor do they play a decisive part in enabling him to do so; he may, of course, incarnate the spirit of his age or he may be a long way in advance of it, and given the necessary materials for the execution of his design he can pursue his intentions in a garret. But a revolutionary, no matter how fanatical his ambition, how clearly defined his ideas, cannot translate those ideas into action apart from a historical situation which is favourable to the putting into operation of his programme. Lenin would no doubt have returned to Russia in 1917 by one way or another; but had not the Czarist state collapsed he might still be brooding in exile over the future communist revolution and meditating over nice points in the Marxist philosophy. Without the inertia of German democracy in the post-war period, combined with the intrigue and corruption which distinguished the last months of the Weimar Republic, the social unrest caused by the economic slump, and resentment against the Versailles Treaty, Hitler might have been nothing more than a party agitator. The creativeness of the politician who is at the same time a revolutionary consists in his ability to evoke new enthusiasm, replace old forms with new, and direct the energies of the nation along new channels. He is usually called forth by a sense of urgency and of national or social need which he alone is able to meet. It is when his activities, or the new developments shown by the new state, are relevant to the moral aspect of politics that they are seen to be destructive as well as creative, as when a revolutionary state begins to invade other states and discards generally accepted notions of right and wrong which must be observed if nations are to live together in harmony. The condemnation of

Communism and Nazism is a moral one, for each system has been able to realize its ends only by means which are immoral.

The political genius, then, is creative, but in a different sense from the artistic or literary or scientific genius. Without him the forces would cease to be organized and consolidated which are the source of a nation's energy. For history is not primarily, curiously enough, the history of peace, but is directed by convulsions such as revolutions, wars, and race migrations, though beneath and apart from these are to be found the lesser changes in national habits, the influence of abstract ideas such as time and space, constitutional changes, and the diffusion or rejection of moral ideas.

These violent manifestations of the spirit which bring about major changes are now so destructive that civilization will be incapable of surviving many more of them, for the dysgenic tendencies in history will have to be reversed if anything approximating an organic conception of human society is ever to be realized. Such a conception is unlikely to come from the mind of a purely political genius, opportunist or strategist, for its implications are fundamentally ethical and religious. A political approach to the question of the supersession of unlimited nationalism and unrestricted sovereignty is usually based upon grounds of expediency or reason, holding, for example, that some more organic view of world-society demands a more equitable distribution of the world's economic resources.

It is, however, only on the religious or moral plane that there emerges a really vital concern with the innermost nature of the matter, substituting for the principle of expediency the suprahuman one of the will of God for mankind. Political morality is usually the morality of expediency, whereas religious morality, Christian morality, is the morality of grace, not the morality of my station, or nation, and its duties. The political genius is concerned with the regeneration or reformation of his own national life in the first place, and he is less dangerous when he confines his plans to his own nation; if others wish to adopt them, well and good. But they should be accepted voluntarily from within, not imposed from without. Just as the creative genius of the revolutionary or the reformer is necessary for the life of a nation, made necessary, it may be, by the concern of a creative God for the well-being of national societies, so is the creative morality of the saint, the prophet, and the dedicated spirit, illumined by grace and by the vision of a world-commonwealth willed by God, a necessary factor in the progress of history towards the twofold end of the purification of the nation and realization of a community bigger than the nation. The "failure of history" up to the present is chiefly due to the absence of a religious morality of grace which is truly creative in the sense of doing away with the "old man," to use the Pauline terminology, and bringing about his supersession by the "new man" in Christ.

A third type of creative genius is the pioneer in the religious life and in the realm of morals. The work of some ethical teachers, such as Confucius, is cohesive rather than creative, welding the community together rather than releasing new moral energy; such was the achievement of the authors of the Levitical code and the book of the Deuteronomic reforms. Islam is to a certain extent a creative movement, for it has covered a considerable area of the world with a society of its own creation, stands for the brotherhood of all who acknow-

ledge the Prophet, has been instrumental in spreading an Islamic culture (for example in Spain from the eighth, to the fifteenth centuries), and, particularly in Africa, has replaced a more primitive religion with its own monotheism and its own form of social organization, and the Koranic law. Islam embraces not one but many races, and possesses its own centre of loyalty. It has had its destructive aspect, such as the extermination of North African Christian society in the seventh century and the barbarism of the Ottoman Turks. Yet the personality of Mahommed cannot be compared with that of Jesus as an example of the creative spirit of man at its highest. In the New Testament and the life having its origin and inspiration in it is to be found the highest level to which the spiritual life has attained, and a dynamic energy which, though it may have flagged from time to time, has not ceased to exercise decisive influence on human life in all stages of its development and in every part of the world.

The present partial eclipse of religion and the concentration on machines and organization do not mean that Christianity has ceased to be a creative movement in Western Civilization, for Christian morality is the most creative of all types of morality, and it is "creative" in a sense similar to that in which art is "creative" inasmuch as a "new" thing is seen to emerge. The artist, as it were, puts something "there" which was not previously "there," enriching our experience as well as adding to the number of "things" in the world. The picture is more than a distribution of paint on canvas: it has a "soul" of its own, its own particular form of unity, an autonomous existence independent of where it may be hung or of the period in which it is conceived. It possesses a certain universality of appeal, for unless it belongs to some obscure and incomprehensible school, it can be understood by people of all periods as a thing with its own intrinsic value, speaking a language more universal than that of speech. When the aesthetic impulse is blended with the religious, as for example in the Sistine Madonna of Raphael or Dürer's drawing of hands in prayer, the result appeals to one's imagination and also to one's piety. The essence of art is communicability, the form which it takes being the medium communicating the values, emotions, or ideas which the artist considers worth communicating. The same is true of music, which, however, is in a different category from the visual arts in that it is more abstract in nature, depends upon successiveness rather than simultaneity for its total effect, and is not "there," like the picture, when it has been played.¹ It may be recalled by the memory, or replayed from the printed page; but the notes on the paper are not the music as the colour and form constitute the picture. To those who can read the music a clear impression of it can be given: it can be mentally apprehended, but only as an even greater abstraction than heard music. The sounds, if arranged and reproduced in the desired order, create in the listener a sensation of pleasure or interest or communicate emotions, such as an intense nostalgia, as is the case with Schubert's songs, or rouse feelings of elation by association or symbolism, as is done by a national anthem or by the sentimentalism of popular songs.

Music on the grand scale can, I believe, be considered to be related to the ultimate values of goodness, truth, and beauty. The medieval people had

¹ Cf. Browning's *Abt Vogler*.

a quaint idea that the planets in their revolutions made music, a childlike way of suggesting that in so far as music may provoke "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" it has a definite relation to the structure of reality, though all music clearly does not have this effect. It is true of only a very small quantity of the total output of the world's composers. Most of it is meant to entertain; only when it reaches the levels of Beethoven's Mass in D or his greater symphonies, or Mozart's 12th Mass and Bach's religious music can music be regarded as spiritual in the deepest sense.

Christian morality shares with art the double qualities of creativeness and communicability. It creates a "new" kind of life. Art and this highest of all moralities reorganize alike the inner life as a revolutionary movement reorganizes the life of a nation; but they belong to the order of values including truth, beauty, and goodness, for a life can be beautiful, possessing a style or form of its own, just as an artistic creation can be beautiful, whereas nobody would dream of applying these categories to the state, whose character is to be assessed in terms of function and effectiveness, not of truth or beauty or goodness. Only when a state is considered in relation to some ethical standard can it be said to be "good," and for some its "goodness" is largely instrumental, in so far as it ministers to and promotes the welfare of the nation; for others it is, however, an ultimate "good" in itself, as when it is thought to be of absolute value.

The religious morality of the New Testament is throughout a creative and not a regulative morality, embodying not a code, but a spirit, productive of a new kind of life inspired by a new group of moral ideas, the newness of which can be best grasped when seen against the background of contemporary ethical ideas, as exemplified in the ethics of Stoicism, and comparing the achievements of the two systems in the realm of conduct. Stoicism, the most widespread and incorrupt form of moral teaching contemporary with the beginning of Christianity, was incapable of influencing the conduct of a large number of people, and generally incapable of producing a type of character approaching saintliness, with the possible exceptions of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. The Stoics preached virtue and the ascendancy of reason, but had no conception of a future life or of redemption, advocating a heroic resignation rather than triumph over circumstances. Among the Stoic ideals *caritas* (corresponding to *agape*) had no conspicuous position; Seneca, for example, while he exalted clemency as a virtue, had nothing but contempt for pity, which he considered a form of weakness. Cicero, however, does mention *caritas generis humani*, which was the nearest approach of the pagan world to the Christian virtue of *agape*, and yet, in comparison with it, sterile. Its basis was natural law, not Christian experience. It was not a redemptive quality, and because it was a personal attitude rather than a divine attribute, seemed to have little to say to a world which had no positive faith. The newly-emerged virtue of *agape*, immeasurably richer than the Stoic interpretation of *caritas*, appealed to the submerged strata of society as well as to its higher levels, and during the period of Christian history has appealed to peoples of the most diverse traditions and achievements and is alone, among the higher spiritual values, able to redeem history by redeeming man from subjugation.

tion to the passions which have made history tragic. Christian morality has superseded Stoic morality supported only by natural law.

In spite of the failure of Christians to realize the full implications of their membership of a universal church, and in spite of the distortion which Christian ethics have often undergone, and of the limitations and betrayals of which the church has been guilty, Christian morality, in the words of Dr. Hensley Henson, "holds a brief for the fundamental franchises of humanity, and cannot possibly make terms with any system which does violence to the rights of man."¹ Frequently, however, the official representatives of the church have shown themselves to be indifferent and even hostile towards these fundamental franchises. In Ivan Karamazov's fable of the Grand Inquisitor Dostoevski has described in unforgettable words the attitude not only of the Roman Catholic Church but of all forms of authoritarianism towards the creative freedom implicit in Christian morality; and it is a condemnation of religious authoritarianism that it has not tolerated such "franchises" as Christianity, when faithful to itself, is committed to defend and to preserve.

"The secret of man's being is not only to live but to have something to live for. Without a stable conception of life man would not consent to go on living, and would rather destroy himself than remain on earth, though he had bread in abundance. That is true. But what happened? Instead of taking man's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, even death, to freedom of choice and the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience."²

This accusation of the Inquisitor is the answer of all authoritarianism to the demand to be free and creative: especially when the creative activity proceeds outside the society or institution exercising authority. It is above all the answer of the totalitarian state to those who demand the right to live as free individuals it is often the answer of the plebeian mind to the aristocratic, of *Vermassung* to *Hochwertigkeit*; of institutional religion to the prophetic; of the ethics of law to the ethics of grace. Dostoevski, like Berdyaev, who owes so much to him, appreciated the ethical and spiritual value and significance of freedom; each had lived under Russian tyrannies so diverse and yet so similar, expressing themselves in political and intellectual absolutism, the later even more so than its predecessor; each was aware of the moral tragedy inherent in the human struggle, of the conflict between the good and the satanic in human life. The Inquisitor's accusation was, in a word, the accusation which the Pharisees and the Scribes brought against Jesus. The authoritarian institution, be it church or state, makes inevitable the imposition of its own form of integration, a compulsory integration of which the chief feature is the denial of freedom and creative originality. But this imposed integration does not release the spirit, as does the harmony produced by a morality based upon grace and freedom. The one leads to a "closed," the other to a "free" conception of life, facing the world with open eyes instead of with a closed mind. The one intensifies the tragic in history when applied to politics, the other redeems it. For the redemption of history is the ultimate aim of Christian morality: world-integration as well as personal integration. Such redemption

¹ *Gifford Lectures*, 1936, p. 293.

² *The Brothers Karamazov*, Tr. Garnett, p. 268. The following pages should be read in order to appreciate the Inquisitor's arguments. The virtue of *agapē* is admirably illustrated in the characters of Alyosha Karamazov and of the old priest Father Zossima.

is the ultimate result of the conception of the Kingdom of God as applied to this world: the resolution of the tension between the Good and the Satanic, imaginatively pictured in the Gospels as "Satan falling from heaven," that is, the ejection of the diabolical from that realm of experience over which God and the Good Will should exercise sovereignty.

As long as Western civilization has not completely forgotten the source of creative morality its potentiality for great good will not be exhausted, and to the group of ideas which are centred in Christian morality belongs the theoretical basis of Western democracy. At the present time the latter seems to have lost much of its creative power, being on the defensive, and apologizing for itself instead of exhibiting to the world a faith in its mission and a confidence in its own excellence.

CHAPTER IV

THE CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF DEMOCRACY

I

IT is refreshing to read Kant's little treatise *On Perpetual Peace* (*Zum Ewigen Frieden*), and to be reminded of the conditions which that great philosopher considered necessary if nations were to live together undisturbed by war. Peace, Kant believed, could be achieved when states became republican (though not necessarily democratic), when public right was founded upon a federation of free states, and through the practice of universal hospitality. No treaty of peace should be esteemed valid in which was tacitly reserved matter likely to be provocative of future war; no state should pass under the dominion of any other state; standing armies were to be abolished; no state should interfere with the constitution or form of government of any other state; any violation of rights committed in one place should be felt throughout the whole community. In this treatise are to be found most of the principles which are considered to be necessary if peace is to be organized in the twentieth century, foreshadowing many of the thoughts behind the League of Nations and its Covenant. In his idea of enlightened internationalism, advocating a kind of world-citizenship (which he intended as a right, not as a piece of philanthropy) based upon reason, Kant was far ahead of his time; and the sophistic maxims to which he referred as so often inspiring the conduct of states, and in which is summarized the technique of aggressive diplomacy, were a remarkable anticipation of the methods developed by Kant's own fellow-countrymen one hundred and forty years after the publication of the treatise. In his observations on the relations between morals and politics he says that in theory there need be no opposition between them, though such opposition will always exist subjectively, that is "in consequence of the selfish propensity of man." Yet he affirms his belief that politics should be subordinate to, and not given precedence over, morality. He realizes what are some of

the contradictions involved in bringing morality to bear upon politics, but, he sums up,

"true politics can never take a step without having previously rendered homage to morality; united with this, it is no longer a difficult or complicated art, morality cuts the knot which politics is incapable of untying, wherever they are in opposition to each other. The rights of man ought to be religiously respected. . . . One cannot compromise here between right and utility; politics must bend the knee before morality; but by this means it may also expect too insensibly to attain to an eminence, where it will shine with an immortal glory."¹

Kant desired to see politics moralized, and his views have much in common with the ideas of the modern Christian who is flung into the conflict not only between states but between the claims of the state and the claims of God. In this connection it is Kant, not Hegel, who has most to say to those who are endeavouring to relate politics to ethics; for the latter would place the state above morality: it is the self-realization of the Absolute, and therefore subordinate to nothing.

The tragedy of the twentieth century is the result largely of the conflict between the Kantian theory of the ultimacy of morality and the Hegelian theory of the ultimacy of the state, and in the victory of the latter in certain European states. The liberal tradition, with its roots in the Enlightenment, looks forward to the victory of reason as embodied in the idea of perpetual peace guaranteed by a true federation of nations pledged to renounce force as an instrument of national policy. In modern history the League of Nations and the Pact of Paris appeared to be the fulfilment of that hope until political expediency overruled idealism and showed that nations usually act in the first place from reasons of self-interest; and now, when the logical results of unrestricted national sovereignty are so clear, and in their consequence so disastrous, men are turning again to the political solution which in principle was advocated by Kant. What this amounts to, however, is an appeal to reason in desperation, but reason has not yet solved political problems because of the easier appeal to the emotions in the shape of patriotism and imperialism, especially in a nation such as Germany, which is politically less mature than any other great European country. The history of the last twenty years makes one wonder if an appeal to reason is not futile; for no defence of the war-system can be made in the name of reason, whereas the appeal to reason in the name of peace and enlightened internationalism meets with no success whatever.

The Christian, seeking an alternative to the tragic course of history which has been pursued during sixty centuries or so of civilization, believes that, if found, it will have to accord with reason, not with unreason, and that it cannot be found in the gospel of unrestricted national sovereignty, though the complete abolition of sovereignty cannot, at present, be regarded for several reasons as being a matter for practical realization. But he also believes that there can be no lasting escape from the tragedy unless the alternative offered to the present management, or mismanagement, of world-politics is in accordance with the demands and postulates of faith, for his politics are inseparable from his theology. *The problem of Homo Sapiens is ultimately that of Homo Credens.* It cannot be supposed that the will of God desires the continuance of restricted

¹ *Perpetual Peace*, end of Appendix I.

international trade, the right of each nation to be judge in its own case and to dominate other races for its own profit and aggrandizement, or the disintegration of world-society through the return to semi-barbarism of nations compelled by war to abandon humane scruples and chivalrous behaviour. The Old Testament and the New, ancient though they may be, are still the inspiration of the noblest morality and the highest religion, and can create the attitude of mind which gives rise to a solution of the political problem which satisfies both reason and religion. St. Paul's speech delivered in Athens¹ is thought to have been influenced by Stoic ways of thinking; but however that may be, it constitutes a sort of charter for a consecrated conception of nationality based upon reason and faith.

The political life of nations, and through it civilization and history, will be given a new direction when more and more people, more and more nations, come to realize that, if a world-order is to offer some promise of perpetual peace, it must have as its foundations both reason and faith. Only then will peace be more than the elusive dream of philosophers and political Utopians. For the problem of history is to a great extent the problem of peace, now that national cultures have been so influenced by Western ideas of life and politics as to make the continuance of ignorance and intolerance and violence almost incomprehensible to the intelligent mind. Unfortunately they are still with us, and they are with us because nations have not learned, and up to the present time have not wanted to learn, that their policies can only cause misery and destruction when unrelated to considerations involving the welfare of those outside themselves. Though politics is autonomous, in so far as it deals with the secular affairs of a nation, just as art is autonomous, the behaviour of nations, as embodied in and resulting from their politics, is nevertheless a matter of morals, and the course of politics should be determined by moral considerations.

Democracy appears to be the only form of government which is consciously bound up with such considerations; in its modern form it has a religious foundation, and though it is not believed to-day that it is inseparable from that foundation, it is difficult to see how long it can continue apart from it. Like much current morality, belief in it is retained while its transcendental basis is denied.

2

The ideal of perpetual peace achieved through an open society, then, is not a recent one, though since 1918 many of the best minds in the West have been deeply concerned about it. In modern times it goes back at least as far as Kant, and recurred in the nineteenth century to culminate in the twentieth in the conception of the League of Nations which, unfortunately, was not allowed to realize it.

To-day the same task lies before the nations: the advancement of peace and the evolving of an organic unity. As long as this remains to be done the creative mission of democracy is unfulfilled; for the emergence of a new kind

¹ Acts, Ch. 17.

of civilized society is the one remaining thing, on the secular plane, awaiting completion. The past has made its great contributions to the civilized life: they can be drawn upon, and have been drawn upon, by subsequent generations, and their creative power is not yet exhausted. These past achievements may never be surpassed; but the creation of a new political order is the great task which is to be realized in the future, a task the completion of which has hitherto tragically eluded the men of goodwill who have striven to bring it to fruition.

In order to save Western civilization from decay creative ideas are necessary. Can democracy supply these ideas, and the passion for them which is necessary for their execution and embodiment in a tangible order of society? Potentially, yes; but at present it still suffers from a paralysing inertia and an inadequate conception of the nature of rights and responsibilities. The Christian criticism of democracy as hitherto experienced, as Mr. Michael Roberts has pointed out, is that it is concerned with rights rather than with duties, and this preoccupation, as we have observed elsewhere, ignores the main ethical theme of the New Testament. But the basic ideas of democracy are creative ideas: freedom, equality, self-government; ideas which have been so often and so disastrously abused. Even in a non-democratic state such as the U.S.S.R. the gradual approximation to the practice of these ideas shows how universal is their character, and that in one form or another they possess enormous creative potency.

A planned society, or at any rate a society which is to a great extent planned in the interest of the majority of its members, is, we have maintained, not incompatible with the exercise of political freedom; the conjunction of planning and freedom is likely to lead to a complete transformation of social and international life in such a way as to release many forms of energy which have up to the present been suppressed or perverted. A re-spiritualized democracy, for example, should regenerate the national community in such a way that those who belong to it will feel that it belongs to them, that they really inherit its traditions and possess its soil. Such a democracy, organically uniting those creative forces which, if consciously appreciated, lead to the true understanding of one's culture and to a proper valuation of the land and all that it yields, should be more capable than the present rootless industrial mass-society of releasing a new creative power which will put an end to man's sense of estrangement from the land which he inhabits. Democracy should have the power to make possible the free development of personality in a far greater degree than those systems which provide man with a feeling of self-respect and an awareness of social solidarity by encouraging in him the exclusive sense of identification with the *Volk* to whom he is bound by blood and contempt of other natural communities.

If the only alternatives to democracy evident in the modern world are to be judged by their results, their very nihilism or absolutism disqualifies them from making any creative contribution to the progress of mankind. All they have done has been to hasten the dissolution of the old order without bringing to birth anything new, for tyranny is one of the oldest things in the world.

The picture at the present time, however, is far from reassuring. The British public displays little awareness of the extreme seriousness of the situation and shows little of that enthusiasm for what one assumes to be its democratic beliefs without which social and political decay are bound to set in. The comments of two anti-Nazi Germans on the English scene as it appeared to them should make one think furiously. One of them said to me: "The well-to-do class is snobbish, the middle-class seems to have no interests, and the working-class is selfish and without responsibility." The second comment was rather more concise: "*Die Engländer schlafen.*" Even if these judgments are rather rash generalizations, there is still some truth in them. As a great democracy we are lacking in the sense of vitality which should accompany confidence in a faith worth holding; yet in spite of this melancholy conclusion, democracy is on the side of progress, humaneness, and justice, and is alone concerned about the creation of an open society which is the antithesis to the closed slave-community which Europe and Asia would become if anti-democratic powers were to dominate and determine their historical destiny. Even if the "uniformity of the progress of the human mind" about which Kant spoke is an incorrect characterization of the process of advances and set-backs which are history, there is little likelihood of any such progress without the political expression of the moral principles which are the stuff and substance of the democratic faith.

Whether democracy is able to meet the great demands which are made upon it depends upon whether the members of democratic communities realize what is required of them, and upon the recovery by democrats, and by those who are now apathetic, of the Christian heritage which is theirs, and of the rich cultural values which have played their part in the development of civilization and have yet the supreme part to play.

On these terms alone can democracy be truly creative, and upon its creative potentiality depends the future of civilization.

BOOK TWO

THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN AND OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I

THE Christian democrat knows well enough that only through its own redemption can democracy become a political instrument for the rescue of modern society from the intolerable tensions with which it is afflicted. He does not consider that political democracy by itself can ever possess the quality of finality; for "democracy" can lead to tyranny unless it has the right kind of counterweight. He knows, or at any rate believes, that the Christian doctrine of man is not compatible with the optimism which sees in politics the only solution to the human problem; for Christianity denies that a political system can in itself achieve finality. The political is only one aspect of human activity, and cannot therefore be regarded as ultimate.

I have said that politics is an object of ethical study. It is therefore only one element in the totality of human behaviour; one of the most important, perhaps, but nevertheless no more than one aspect of it. While admitting, however, that it represents a most important division of sociology we must admit that the course political action takes depends not only upon contingent matters such as the psychological and economic conditions of society at any given time, but also upon the nature of man himself. Indeed, it is not schemes but men that have failed to bring about the new order of life which is so generally desired. Man is his own frustration; and, taking the long view, the creative possibilities of democracy are dependent upon the recovery of its spiritual foundation, and upon the degree in which it conforms to the nature of man as a theological and not merely as a sociological being.

For there is no guarantee that democracy, being the product of the political striving of man as we know him, will, of itself, be able to achieve the social Utopia for which he hopes. It may, however, be successful in producing an "open" political society which will function organically and creatively; but the form and nature of this open society will depend upon the quality of the ideals which animate the people who produce it. The Christian cannot avoid declaring that, unless Christianity is a mere by-product of society at a certain stage of its growth (as many, of course, maintain), the creative possibilities of democracy are circumscribed or extended according to the strength or weakness of the agapaic impetus behind human effort.

There are, of course, factors in the growth of civilization which are in themselves outside the scope of moral judgment, such as the problem of technical controls, and these, as Mannheim has shown,¹ demand that we should establish a delimitation of the regions in which theology and sociology operate. Some matters are reserved for the economic and technical expert, and must be regarded as purely political solutions of the problems of social, economic, and international tension. The fact that they are in themselves quite genuine solutions of particular problems should deter us from making such general statements as "Christianity can solve all problems." It is obvious that it cannot, and to say so in a moment of piety does not remove our difficulties. Further, many of the suggestions for social reform which derive from Christian sources and which receive the blessing of official representatives of the Christian churches, while no doubt springing from theological convictions about the nature of man as conceived by the Christian religion, could without objection be endorsed by "good men" of all creeds. Such programmes are not Christian in the sense that they can be said to derive exclusively from Christian principles; nor can it be said that Christian theology leads inevitably to the precise formulation of such programmes. If forms of economic organization inevitably derive from certain Christian principles, why is it that Christendom has never reached unanimity in this matter, and why are the churches so late in discovering that, in the language of modern Continental theology, the "orders" under which we live are the direct concern of the Church? Where there has been agreement between Roman Catholics and Protestants on matters of social and economic reform the basis has been less theology than natural law, as Roman Catholic writers acknowledge.²

Man can, after all, subscribe to a programme for political improvement without relating it to Christian theology and its value is not less because it is not so related. There is much natural good in human nature which some tendencies in contemporary Protestant theology mistakenly ignore. The law of nature is a minimum with which man has been provided by God without which he cannot organize society, nor can he, without it, respond to the Word of God, for, without it, there would be nothing to which God could speak.

The Reformers rejected natural law. For Calvin human nature as the result of original sin was utterly corrupt, and man had no natural capacity for knowing God, and for evolving "good" institutions. This gulf between Revelation and Natural Theology has not been narrowed by contemporary theologians such as Barth and Brunner, though without allocating any place to natural law, to man's innate sense of what is right (even though he does not always act according to it) it is difficult to understand how any human institutions could have evolved at all. Without acknowledging the Word of God, man is capable of doing and recognising the good. It is difficult to see how the radical opposition between the "natural" man and the "spiritual" can be maintained, for even if it be granted that all human institutions, being imperfect, are sinful, they can still be the embodiment of human ideas of the right and the good and the true. Further, if it be true that God has set Eternity in our hearts it cannot be easily denied that, whether man consciously

¹ *A Diagnosis of Our Time*, 1943.

² E.g., R. A. L. Smith, *The Catholic Church and Social Order*, pp. 37 ff., Longmans, 1943.

accepts the Word of God or not, there is in him something of the divine spark, whether of reason or of faith. The "natural man" may not be aware of his spiritual nature, but that is because he does not listen to the Word of God. The modern disparagement of humanism fashionable in contemporary Protestant theology seems to be equivalent to a refusal to see that even the secular order must live by a standard of values which are not biological, and are therefore ultimately of spiritual origin. We do know that the particularly *human* characteristic is the sense of responsibility and obligation; the moral law in ourselves, the feeling for the rightness or wrongness of institutions, the very fact of law itself, bear witness to something which distinguishes man from sub-rational creation.

We should not, therefore, disparage the ability of human institutions to produce a considerable degree of good and to encourage the living of the good life even if they are not the conscious product of the Christian faith. In theory a democratic system should be a powerful instrument in the promotion of the good life and the erection of a "good" political system, and on the political plane it is the only system which can be defended in terms of rights, that is, of natural law.

But the Christian theologian is concerned less with justifying any system in terms of the law of nature than with inquiring whether any human system, *of itself*, is capable of the maximum amount of creativeness; for every human situation involving power is capable of demonic perversion from which it cannot be redeemed on the purely human level. A democracy may, for a time, function admirably while denying the fundamental Christian truth that man is a being made in the image of God. The humanist democrat may deny all that is involved in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, and therefore, for the Christian, his conception of man, life, and politics is woefully incomplete, and because it is incomplete it is capable of error and therefore of sinful perversion. It is incomplete because it rejects the New Testament virtue of *agapé* (love), which is the very source of spiritual creativeness of the highest order; and *agapé* is the fruit of the spirit (*Galatians* v, 22). It is, in a word, the Kingdom of God (*Romans* xiv, 17).

We must therefore include some consideration of the Christian doctrine of man if we are to judge the creativeness of democracy by the degree in which it acts or declines to act in conformity with this doctrine.

2

The first thing that needs to be said is that if man is to be fully understood in society he is to be thought of not only in terms of psychology, politics, biology, and social behaviour (as he is observed by scientists, mass observation, and statistologists), but as a theological being. That is, man cannot be fully understood apart from God, and any attempt to exclude God from the process of understanding him is not only incomplete but false. Augustine's famous prayer "Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee" is a true characterization of the relation between God and man in asserting our inability to arrive at a true understanding of the nature

of man without the knowledge and experience of God. Christian anthropology is essentially theological, even though on the level of natural law there are things common both to the religious and the secular idea of man. Man is that to which God turns, to whom God speaks; and this despite man's refusal to listen to God's Word.

Behind every sociology there lies an anthropology. Behind Marxism lies what may be described as an economic anthropology; behind Nazism what may be loosely called a biological one: man as a member of the *Volks-gemeinschaft*—the racial community—the bond of which is blood and soil. Man, of course, has his roots in nature, he is appointed to live within the realm of the nation, and his institutions are determined by methods of production, by the economic system; the exaggeration of these truths, however, can be so great as to constitute an error. But in order to understand these systems we must know something about their anthropology, their doctrine of man. Similarly, if we are to know what can be the behaviour of man in society, that is as a social being, we must know what man is as he is declared by Christian theology to be.

Man is *capax Dei*, and lives under the Word of God, who as Creator has made him, and has made him in His own image.

The first thing said about man in the Bible is that his relation to God is like that of a picture to its model. Man must first of all be defined theologically; only then may the philosopher, the psychologist, and the biologist make their statements. The fact that man is what he is is not a merely human but a theological concern; he is not to be understood in himself, nor from the reason which is in him. He can be understood only in the light of that which stands over against him, the Word of his Creator. His relation to God, not his reason, is the summit of the pyramid, the highest point in the hierarchy; this is the way in which man is built, and this is how man can be understood.¹

It is because God is Creator and Redeemer that man is to be understood in this sense, for nothing else is sufficient to account for the range and depth of the goodness and the sin which are in him. Man is created in the image of God. But man is a sinner, that is, he lives in a "fallen" state, and it is this contradiction between man's present state and his origin in the mind of God which provides the vast problem of man in society. Man is in revolt against his divine origin. He spurns and rejects the loving Father who has made him and who has made him for Himself, Who goes to the utmost to deliver him from this radical revolution against Himself. In Jesus we know what is the divine intention for human life, yet man rejects the Word of God in Jesus, and in so doing perpetuates his state of revolt, which spreads to every aspect of his individual and collective life. The sociologist's analysis of social and political breakdowns in terms of technical controls only touches the external aspect of the matter.

This conception of man, however, which the Christian theologian holds, is to be interpreted pictorially. For St. Paul, Jesus is the second Adam who restored in man the image lost or obscured by the sin of the first Adam. This has to be understood as myth; only in this way can we understand what is meant by being made "in the image of God." The main thing, however, for our present purpose, is to realize that the contradiction between man's actual behaviour and God's intention for him makes necessary the theo-

¹ E. Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, Lutterworth Press, p. 102.

logical approach to the question of man in society, of man as a political being who has to decide on what principles he is going to build and organize his civilization. Further, it is through the defacement of the divine image in man that, in Berdyaev's phrase, there comes the "disintegration of the human image," which is the concern of both theology and politics.

The principle of the *imago Dei* gains its depth and significance from the doctrine of the Incarnation. However this doctrine is interpreted it means this: that God appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh and that through this appearance the sinful flesh appeared in the likeness of God. Jesus' solidarity with mankind, with Man, the articulation in him of the Word of God, shows that, however man may revolt against God, however sharp the demarcation may be between the divine and the human, through the Incarnation the absolute exclusiveness of these categories is broken down. Man as such is not divine; but flesh may be the vehicle of spirit. Further, it should be said that the specifically Christian doctrine is not the brotherhood of man (this may be the teaching of secular democracy and is as old as Stoicism) but that man is a child of God, which is a very different thing; it is, in fact, the Fatherhood of God which is the only possible ground of the brotherhood of man. Only within this vast conception can the political and biological (racial) obstacles standing in the way of the realization of such brotherhood be finally overcome.

The Christian doctrine of man teaches, secondly, that man is made for community, for fellowship, and that apart from it he cannot be fully and truly human. He may be an individual, but not a person. To use the familiar phraseology popularized by Martin Buber, man is really man through the Thou-and-I relationship. To himself he is an "I," but to others a "Thou." Without this dialectical conception of his own identity he cannot be thought of as existing in society at all. It is *agapé*, for example, which makes possible *koinonia* (fellowship, community); it is love which is the condition of the richest fellowship. Conversely, the anagapaic life makes impossible the life of fellowship. It is to the denial of *agapé* that the great breakdowns of modern civilization are to be attributed, not in the first place to the failure of the technical factor, important though this is. The collective, be it noted, is not the same thing as the community, for in collective man, in so far as man can be turned into a collective being, the human as well as the divine image is defaced.

Thirdly, Christian theology defines man as one possessing an immortal soul, as the inheritor of eternal life which can be seized upon here and now. Therefore whatever happens in this life is of significance for eternity.¹ Jesus made this clear when he spoke about rewards and punishments. Hence if man is spirit, he is more than a biologically conditioned being. In New Testament terms, he is not only *soma* (body) and *psyche* (mind); he is *pneuma* (spirit) as well.

Fourthly, the Christian doctrine of man is incomplete without the conception of freedom. The New Testament speaks of "the glorious liberty of the sons of God," and without attributing great significance to freedom we cannot conceive of any Christian doctrine of sin or of political error. Man is not,

¹ Cf. the parables of Lazarus and the Rich Man, the Last Judgment, and the Rich Fool, Luke XVI, 19-31, Matthew XXV, 31-46, Luke XII, 16-21.

as Calvin insisted, utterly unfree, for lack of freedom means inability to sin. If he is free he has the power to dispose according to his desire the institutions or orders which comprise his social life, and the disintegration of the human image is chiefly the consequence of the misuse of freedom. In seeking complete autonomy in matters of politics, ethics, economics, and science, man is courting disaster because he is using his freedom to move away from the source and roots of life instead of strengthening his dependence upon them.

Fifthly, man is an end in himself: he is not to be treated or regarded as a tool. This it is which alone makes intelligible any doctrine of Incarnation and Redemption, for it is against the treating of man as a tool, as an adjunct to a machine, as a means to the achievement of somebody else's good, that Christianity protests. Man is a social but not a collective being. He is not made for the state: the state exists for him, and although he assumes significance by belonging to a community, the over-emphasis on this by German political philosophers since Fichte has had disastrous results for the happiness of Europe. The totalitarian degradation (whether carried out from above, or from below by the mob) of the image of God in man and of the image of man himself is inevitable if man is treated not as an end in himself but as the means to the realization of pre-selected ends over which he has no control.

It is in relation to this Christian doctrine of man that, in the long run, the rightness or wrongness of any political system is to be judged. The Christian holds that the creativeness of such a system is inseparably bound up with the place it gives to this doctrine.

3

Now here we come to the point which raises most controversy for theology and ethics and, we might add, for politics and sociology in general. If man is a worthy being, created by God "in His own image" and living "under," even if in opposition to, the Word of God; if he is in the last resort responsible to God, a child of God, living under God's providential care, for whose redemption God became flesh and for whom Christ died, God somehow enduring the agony of Calvary with Christ; in other words, if man is what evangelical Christianity proclaims him to be—an end and not a tool—then the kind of life which man lives in society is of supreme importance, and is a legitimate object of study for Christian theology. The whole vast complex of human interdependence and interindebtedness is to be judged in the light of these declarations. Whatever instrumentalizes man and treats him as of little account and rides roughshod over individuals or groups who think differently (whether it be the many or the few, an individual or a corporate body), comes under the condemnation of the Word of God. What man does with man is God's concern as well as man's. God is concerned with our social and political institutions in so far as they affect the life of the "brother for whom Christ died."

It is to be regretted that the church has been so late in realizing this, for though the Reformers dealt with the relation of Church and State and of Christian ethics to money and business, they did not develop any coherent theory of society. Luther, for example, in 1523 wrote a pamphlet on *The*

Limits of Obedience to Worldly Rule, vindicating the use of compulsion and setting forth the idea familiar to students of Lutheran theology that the state exists to protect the individual from evil and must therefore be obeyed. Luther was concerned primarily with the questions of "How shall a prince behave?" and "Does the Christian owe obedience to the tyrant? If so, under what conditions?" Being limited by the political forms of his time he conceived of good rule as that of the benevolent despot, maintaining, however, that in a Christian order there is no need for despotism, and that a Christian may be disobedient to the unjust prince. He dealt with the problem of Christian statesmanship in a non-Christian society within the framework of his time, but offered little guidance as to what a Christian state is or how it may be achieved.

Both Luther and Calvin derived their political ideas, in so far as they can be said to have had any, from Romans xiii, which in their hands became an excellent foundation for the defence of things as they were. Calvin, in accordance with his own preference for republican government, interpreted the "powers that be" as referring to magistrates, and in the last chapter of the *Institutes* expounds his theory of government. We must obey the magistrates no matter what they do, for they are divinely appointed. Whoever disobeys them disobeys God; but he adds that an exception must be made if the powers command one to do something opposed to the Word of God, which would be logically impossible in the theocratically ruled town of Geneva. Here again there is no definite theory of government; Calvin was concerned with the limitations of secular power, and his principles led him to the conclusion that all revolt was wrong and sinful.

Nor in the economic sphere do the Reformers offer a coherent doctrine. Luther attacked usury, and Bucer, in his *De Regno Christi*, written in 1540, said, "Neither the Church of Christ, nor a Christian commonwealth, ought to tolerate such as prefer private gain to the public weal, or seek it to the hurt of their neighbours." It is commonly believed, however, that Protestantism had much to do with the rise of capitalism. This thesis has been elaborated in detail by Max Weber and R. H. Tawney; but it is far from certain that capitalism owed its major impulse to Protestantism. Both in Antwerp and in Nuremberg, in Augsburg, Genoa, and elsewhere, capitalism was well established before the Reformation. It is true that the Reformers condemned monopolies, but this is about as far as they went. Calvin considered that trade should be an activity indulged in to the glory of God, and this conscientious attitude doubtless considerably contributed to the self-discipline of those who engaged in commerce. But the teaching of the Reformers in matters political and economic is fragmentary.

The New Testament offers little guidance on economics or the theory of the state. The saying about giving things to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's offers no foundation for political theory, for it does not even suggest what things are Cæsar's.

We cannot, therefore, find any clear guidance in the Reformers or in the New Testament as to what kind of state or economy is to be regarded as specifically Christian and in conformity with the Christian conception of

man. All we can do is to take our Christian doctrine of man as elucidated by Christian theology and apply it as a test to any economic system which we propose to examine, and decide how far such a system is in conformity with it.

4

Because man lives in a "fallen" state his institutions are accordingly far removed from a state of perfection, and are liable at any time to become the instruments of demonic powers. The Book of Revelation presents a masterly vision of the demonic power of the state, of world-rule, in conflict with the divine rule, and what is true of the state may be true of any other human institution. The great disruptive forces are demonic powers, erupting from the abysmal depths of man's being: dark powers dwelling in the hidden recesses of the human soul. The demonic consists, to quote once more the words of Tillich, of "elemental creative powers which have living form, but which, when they achieve excess of power and interfere with the organic unity of form, become destructive principles." This tension between creativeness and destructiveness is one with which both theology and politics have to deal, and until it is resolved there can be no hope of building any kind of permanent order. However human institutions are organized there is always the fear that they may be corrupted by the release of demonic forces which can be overcome only by the Word of God. This, for example, is the theme of the great passage in Ephesians vi. Power itself is a demonic force, and its potency for evil can only be removed when it is controlled by a community which has learned to derive its sovereignty from the Word of God, and when it is actuated by the living impulse of creative *agapé*.

The problem, then, for the Christian philosopher who approaches the problems of politics and civilization is how to suggest the conditions under which these creative-destructive forces can be sublimated into purely creative ones, and how the creative forces in the realm of politics can be most fully released without the dangers which have hitherto lurked in all political systems. Power may be the language of politics; but power need not be destructive.

It should be clear by now that the position adopted in this book is that, of all political forms, democracy is most likely to be free from the temptations of power, though, as has already been emphasized, no human institution is completely free from such temptations, and is not likely to be for a very long time. A Christian philosophy of politics and of society, however, maintains that if the "orders" under which men live are ever to become what the Christian hopes they may become, and are to fulfil their maximum creative potency, they can do so only in so far as they are redeemed by the Kingdom of God and are the expression in the political sphere of the Christian conception of man. When God is acknowledged as Creator, King, and Redeemer, these orders become subject to His rule, and therefore not to the rule of "Satan," and the vast creative powers latent in human life will be free to be exercised to the greatest possible extent.

Christian theology, then, when applied to the problems of civilization and politics, cannot avoid making an assertion which to the secularist—the man

who relies solely upon political action—seems to be undemonstrable: namely, that the human order is bound to fail as long as it is separated from the divine order. For the Christian this is a postulate of faith and at the same time a deduction from experience, from history past and present. The redemption of politics, and, through politics, of civilization, is therefore a fundamental necessity for the Christian who views the problems presented by politics and civilization. Man cannot be himself, he cannot fulfil his real destiny, on the level of secular politics alone, for the reason that he is not a purely secular creature but a being with his roots in God. He is, potentially at any rate, a child of God, and civilization breaks down because he acts in a manner contradictory to his nature. The Christian doctrine of man is the necessary precondition of human progress and of the rescue of politics from the grip of demonic forces.

5

There are two Biblical passages, one at the end of the book of Jonah, and the other in the eighteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, which contain most significant references to civilization. The first of these passages represents God as pitying the city of Nineveh because civilization matters to him; the second is a magnificent prophetic vision of the catastrophe which overtakes a civilization in which human souls are regarded as chattels, as things to be grouped together with merchandise, luxuries, and beasts. Neither of these pictures was to be fulfilled on the plane of history, for Nineveh did fall, and Rome did not, at any rate in the manner in which the author of Revelation predicted. But each of these pictures is true: civilization *does* matter to God, and world-rule, in a moral universe, cannot escape ultimate disaster if it is divorced from the Kingdom of God. The process may be swift or it may be slow, but it is inexorable. "Prophetic" truth, therefore, is, in a sense, different from "historical" truth, though prophecy, for the Hebrews, was always related to the moral and historical situation. It took the form of a prognosis based on the moral diagnosis of history; but it was not limited in its application by "historic" time. Time, and with it history, undergo, for the prophet, a kind of foreshortening. The future is "there," so to speak, but "not yet." Judgment has been pronounced and will become operative not only as a transcendent act of God but as the consequence of the logic of the historic situation.

This representation of the judgment hanging over history, though strange if history is regarded purely as historiography, is nevertheless acutely relevant to all that we have been considering so far; for the Christian interpretation of history implies judgment on civilization if civilization violates the fundamental laws of being.

6

The sphere of politics is the organization of states, as individual entities and as corporate bodies existing in relation to other corporate bodies. But the rise and fall of such states, and the factors governing them, together with

the rise and fall of whole civilizations, constitute, as we have seen, a problem for the philosopher of history. Many such philosophers, notably Hegel, Marx, and Spengler, have exercised considerable influence upon politics; others, for example A. J. Toynbee, have endeavoured to describe the factors determining the rise and fall of civilizations not only as part of an analysis of history but as a guide to its future course, attributing the impulses which stimulate societies to the divine initiative. Toynbee, indeed, in what has so far appeared of his great *Study of History*, has exhibited his acceptance of a Christian philosophy of history; for interpretation of some kind there must be if history is not a blind, unguided succession of haphazard happenings. Theology, in other words, must come to the rescue if history is to have "meaning," for it is certainly not self-explanatory.

For the theologian in his endeavour to interpret history as something that happens *sub specie eternitatis* political effort must be conceived not only in terms of means but of ends. The secularist regards it as a means adapted to the furtherance of temporal and immediate ends: namely, the efficient government of a particular community at a particular time. Yet, as has been indicated, it is impossible to exclude the moral element from politics without reducing politics to a form of opportunism. In the modern world ethics has been subordinated to politics, or rather excluded from its sphere; the result being that there is no objective standard of right by which politics can be judged. The test is purely pragmatic and opportunistic. The consequences of amoral politics are apparent to all; self-interest is the chief factor governing the relations of states with one another, and war is the clash of forms of incompatible self-interest.

At bottom the approach to politics is bound to be theological, at any rate for the Christian. Being the products of a profoundly human activity, political forms are a reflection of the mind and soul of a particular historical period: of the ambitions of a nation, of its economic aims, of its conception of society and of the importance of class-functions within society. They are an indication of the conception of human nature held by those who sponsor them, and are thus a legitimate object of theological inquiry. It may not appear necessary to explain the problems of politics and civilization in anything more than immediately human terms; but human life does not, for the Christian, admit of such limited interpretation. The conclusions drawn from the fact of the universality of religion (if one excepts its temporary partial eclipse in the first half of the twentieth century) is that men are not satisfied with a purely human explanation of the human. For, no matter from what angle the problems concerning the nature of political forms is viewed, the central question of "rights" cannot be postponed: the "rights" of men within the state, their "rights" against the state, the "rights" of nations, the "rights" of my neighbour. There are, of course, defences of certain "rights" which have no reference to theology, and they are in vogue at the present time. "I have certain rights because I am a member of the working-class, the owning class, the investing class; I have certain rights because I am a member of the folk-community, whose rights take no notice of the rights of other such community. I have rights because I am a "proletarian," but these rights are not to be extended to the "bourgeois." Because I exercise power, I have

rights which I deny to you because you are black, yellow, or brown, or a Jew." Others say: "I believe that all men have rights because they are men, in virtue of their humanity." Or, in the words of Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter: "They (the United Nations) respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they wish to live." People have, or have not, certain "rights."

But why? The conception of "rights" in the first category is a purely subjective one. Certain "rights" are mine because I belong to this or that group, because I am this or that sort of person. Such "rights" are relative, for they can be denied at will to people or societies of people who are different from myself or the society to which I belong. Hence in the modern ideologies of race or class we cannot find any objective basis for a defence of "rights" as things to which "all men" are entitled. The logic of both Communism and Fascism denies that there are such things as general human rights, rights in the abstract. *Menschenrechte* (human rights) do not exist for the Nazi; there are *Volksrechte* (national rights), but only for his own *Volk*, and at first Communism, like Nazism, was completely relative in its conception of rights.

What, then, is to be said about the democratic conception of rights? On the answer to this question depend some of the issues involved in our theological approach to the problems of politics and of civilization. I, as a member of a democratic society, believe that there can be no such thing as natural or unearned privilege; the rights which I claim for myself I must be prepared to grant to all other men. The people, not a class or a group, is the ultimate legislator, and because the "people" as a political concept is irreducible, there are no "rights" which are not permissible to all, and all nations, because composed of the "people," are entitled to enjoy them.

It is one of the glories of the Enlightenment that it bequeathed to our Western civilization men who, as the theoretical founders of democratic thought, believed in "humanity" and in the "rights of man." They may have been excessively optimistic in their beliefs; they may have held romantic views about human nature; but they were at any rate nearer the truth than the oligarchs of their time: men such as Herder, Kant, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Jefferson, and Paine. The framers of the Declaration of Independence believed that certain truths were self-evident: "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Jefferson, in a letter written in 1813, said: "We acknowledge that our children are born free; that freedom is a gift of nature, and not of him who begot them." "It were contrary to feeling, and indeed ridiculous, to suppose that a man had less rights in himself than one of his neighbours, or indeed all of them put together" (to Monroe, 1782). And writing in 1816 to Dupont de Nemours he said:

"I believe that morality, compassion, generosity, are innate elements of the human constitution; that there exists a right independent of force; that a right to property is founded in our natural wants, in the means with which we are endowed to satisfy these wants, and the right to what we acquire by those means without violating the similar rights of other sensible beings; that no one has a right to obstruct another exercising his faculties innocently for the relief of

sensibilities made a part of his nature; that justice is a fundamental law of society; that the majority, oppressing an individual, is guilty of a crime, abuses its strength, and by acting on the law of the strongest breaks up the foundations of society . . .”¹

When one reads what Jefferson wrote about democracy one realizes that his beliefs are, in many respects, what a liberal democrat of to-day would hold, though without sharing his conviction that belief in a good God was dependent upon the success of the American experiment. (“I have no fear, but that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master. Could the contrary of this be proved, I should conclude either that there is no God, or that he is a malevolent being”). To-day we do not speak so happily about the “rights of man” and we are able to judge more easily the success or failure of a particular form of democratic government. The election of judges by popular vote, for example, in America, has led to much corruption and has not ensured an independent judiciary of the kind of which Jefferson would have approved. He advocated the election of judges because he feared the power of a centralized federal judiciary. But whatever might be our enthusiasm for democracy, we are nowadays too critical to abandon our faith in God (if we have any) because democracy may not be all we expect it to be.

It is, however, not with Jefferson’s political ideas that we are dealing; Jefferson has been cited as an example of the men who believed passionately in the rights of man, feeling that they belong to the order of creation and rightfully claimed by man as such. He was the product of an age which believed in Humanity. Rousseau’s *Contrat Social*, Kant’s *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte* and his *Zum Ewigen Frieden*, Herder’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Menschheit*, Voltaire’s vast output, are the product of this liberal and humane temper. Believing, rightly or wrongly, in the natural rights of man, in “Humanity” as the end of all culture (this is exemplified particularly in Herder), they tried, in their eighteenth century way, to see in man a creature illuminated by the light of reason, who, if only given the right opportunity, would think and behave in a perfectly reasonable manner. One of the high-watermarks of this optimism was Bernadin de St. Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie*, which was designed to demonstrate how beautifully people behave in a state of nature when unsullied by the corruptions of civilization. The more serious and less utopianly-minded thinkers retained their faith in popular government even when they were aware that man is far from being a reasonable being. They still believed in the “rights of man” as an indisputable axiom.

But it is easier to maintain that the “inalienable rights” are axiomatic than to find a satisfactory proof that man has a “right” to them. Is it true, to take a modern example, that all peoples have a “right” to choose the form of government under which they wish to live? From the standpoint of European health, security, and sanity, has the German people the “right” freely to choose another dictator-government? M. Stanislaw Stronski, in an article entitled *Un Fait Nouveau dans le Droit des Gens in La France Libre* for February 15, 1944, holds that “la dictature n’est jamais un régime choisi par le peuple,” and that therefore “la définition adoptée par la Charte de l’Atlantique, qui n’admet

¹ *Democracy*, by Thomas Jefferson. Selected and arranged by S. K. Padover, New York, 1939, p. 29.

que des régimes choisis librement par les peuples, comporte l'exclusion des dictatures." But surely a nation can ratify a dictatorship, and cast a total number of votes greater than those cast for any other party and bring a dictatorship into power, as happened in Germany in 1933? Clearly no nation has such a "right" if the exercise of it is going to lead to another global war. And is it true that men, as such, are entitled to demand certain "rights"? "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" are, for Jefferson, "inalienable rights." But there are certain conditions under which alone they can be claimed. Liberty needs to be closely defined; a man may pursue happiness at the expense of other people; he may "live" without being aware of any sense of obligation. He cannot claim the right to be kept alive by the state if he refuses to do any work. Jefferson, of course, would deny any man's right to remain ignorant, for ignorance jeopardizes freedom and democracy. Still, if we omit possible exceptions, the great defenders of the "rights of man" did believe generally that man, by virtue of his humanity, was justified in making certain basic claims which were, in the main, axiomatic.

But why is man such a being as to have the "right" to demand "rights"? And why is one reluctant to grant rights to one who has no sense of obligations? To say that rights are the correlative of duties does not answer the question, for we have not yet shown how a man establishes his right to "rights" even as a correlative of duties. The matter is not as axiomatic as the eighteenth century democrat, with his faith in man, or the Stoic with his respect for the law of nature, would have us believe. Man must be shown to be a being who has a "right" to demand what he believes to be owing to him.

The Christian theologian, as distinct from the secular philosopher, would answer the question, "Why is a man entitled to certain 'inalienable rights'?" as follows. Man is entitled to "inalienable rights" not because he is in the Rousseauesque sense "born free," but because he is what Christianity declares him to be—a child of God. This derives from theology, not from philosophy. Man is a theological as well as a political being, and if he has "inalienable rights" at all, it is because he is what the Christian faith declares him to be. That is, democracy, the exercise of these "inalienable rights" in society, is to be vindicated not on the plane of the political alone but in terms of the Christian doctrine of man. Ideally, one who is made in the image of God has certain rights which he forfeits only when he himself defaces that image. Democracy, a political form, is not in itself an ultimate, and "rights" are not demonstrably inherent in man's nature for philosophical or political reasons. Our modern ideologies insist on this with the utmost vigour, for they do not consider them axiomatic. It is only in relation to God, to the divine origin of man, that "rights" are "inalienable." The ultimate defence of democracy is theological.

Let us repeat, then, that in the last resort political questions are theological questions, involving a certain conception of what man is; they are, in a sense, theological *and* anthropological. And we can go further and say: If man is a certain kind of being, only certain political forms can correspond to the demands of his nature. All peoples at the present time are not suited to liberal-democratic government. The people of China and Central Africa, among others, cannot be regarded as capable of practising a form of self-government which the British Commonwealth has been evolving for generations.

But democracy, government not by tyranny or oligarchy but by the people, is the ultimate end for the realization of which the people of China and everywhere else should be politically educated. But even if there are good reasons why at the present time democracy is not universally practicable, it is more defensible as an end to which social striving should be directed than tyranny or oligarchy. There can be no Christian defence of tyranny; an oligarchy may be justified for reasons of temporary expediency or because it is required by a certain stage of historical development; but it is possible to offer an apologetic for democracy in terms of "human rights" and of Christian theology. Historically, it is the final stage of a series of political forms; for after the people there is no further social group which can be considered to be the source of political sovereignty. In the West it is democracy which has supplanted tyranny and feudal oligarchy, though we should not ignore Plato's warning that democracy contains the seeds of disruption which may in turn make a tyranny inevitable because it destroys itself in craving for freedom.¹

Christianity is not contingent upon any particular political order; democracy can, theoretically, be effective without any Christian basis. But for the Christian concerned with the philosophy of politics the political order is one of the orders ordained by Divine Providence for the reasonable organization of society, and therefore comes within the scope of theological examination.

We shall inquire, therefore, into the place the political order has within the providence of God. Is it a purely human creation or something involving a sense of responsibility towards the more than human? Before, however, we suggest an answer to this question, let us proceed to a closer examination of the Christian doctrine of Providence.

CHAPTER II

PROVIDENCE AND THE PURPOSE OF HISTORY

I

THE theologian and philosopher of history is concerned not so much with the bare facts of history as with the interpretation of them in their totality. In a universe which, for the Christian, begins with Creation and ends in Redemption ("ends" in this context having relation to purpose rather than to time) the things that happen have meaning; history is not a series of incidents which, however inseparably they may be linked to each other through political causality, are no more than a series of infinite but purposeless extension: they have their place in *kairos* as well as in *chronos*. Civilization, then, and the political forms of which it is the embodiment, must be given a place in the process of which the character of purposiveness is demanded by the Christian contemplation of history. If we conceive of civilization as the sum-total of human systems

¹ *Republic*, Bk. VIII, 562.

given quality by certain values, moral, economic, racial, power-political, and so on, we are led to conclude that it carries the seed of its own judgment in so far as men accept or reject higher or lower values. This was the theme of the prophetic message; it is the theme of the Christian philosophy of history.

But does history provide the key to its meaning? We have seen that in history and the political systems which are of first importance in its evolution there are irrational, even catastrophic forces at work; they are frequently so irrational and so catastrophic that we might well conceive of history, in the words of Ortega y Gasset, as something which "moves in great biological rhythms . . . originating in elemental factors, in primary forces of cosmic character." "The true historical reality is not the data, the fact, the thing, but evolution to which impulse is given by fluid materials. History imparts mobility, and creates a rapid where there is calm."¹ In all great revolutionary periods there is this appearance of primeval movement, something which shows little respect for human life, and churns up the more placid periods of history. Some historical scenes do not permit one to see order emerging from chaos, so confused are they. And when civilizations have risen and fallen we wonder why they did so, and why they were lacking in the things which would have enabled them to survive. Political systems which in their time were thought to be divinely instituted have been swept away by revolt and revolution; and it is legitimate, amid this welter of order alternating with confusion, to ask whether history has any predetermined end, any pattern which suggests a definite purpose, whether what the Christian theologian calls Providence plays any part in the shaping of history and in the survival or decline of civilizations and political systems.

For deeply involved in the Christian philosophy of history is the conception of Providence, which has a biblical foundation and implies a dynamic stimulus to history from without. We shall consider this question of Providence in three aspects: personal, national, and general.

2

An early and familiar example of the personal operation of Providence is found in the story of Joseph, expressed in his words of reconciliation to his brothers.

And now be not grieved, not angry with yourselves, that you sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . And God sent me before you to preserve a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and a ruler over all the land of Israel.

An apparent misfortune had been overruled; good had come out of an evil situation, God using the evil as part of His purpose as a providential means of achieving it. The *Book of Job*, too, reveals a grasp of the fundamental questions which belief in a personal Providence implies as do many of the Psalms, which are as eager as Job to question the orthodox view of Providence and to approve of Providence in some form or other. "Though

¹ *Collected Works*, p. 1010, 1370, Madrid, 1936.

he slay me yet will I believe in Him." The ways of Providence are inscrutable. In the New Testament Jesus speaks of God's providential care for the individual:

Are not five sparrows sold for a halfpenny, and not one of them is forgotten by God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

On a secular level a well-known illustration may be found in Thornton Wilder's story *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, in which five individuals faced with insoluble problems have their problems solved for them by the collapse of the bridge which they are crossing, all brought together, we suppose, at one fatal moment. Is it accident or intention? If it is intention, whose intention is it? Vicki Baum's novel, *Nanking Road*, with a similar structure, suggests the same question, though it is not actually put. A dozen people from China, Japan, America and Germany and England are obliged by circumstances to seek work or refuge in Shanghai, and their dilemmas, too, are ended when a bomb destroys the hotel in which they are all living. Here there is a secularized example of what the religious man might call Providence; but the secularist calls it Fate. In Thomas Hardy's famous sentence "The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess" and in Shakespeare's most sombre mood—"The wheel is come full circle: I am here"—there are suggestions that in the non-Christian sense these two great writers had some conception of a Power which ordered human lives for good or ill, chiefly for ill.

Providence is not indifferent to what happens to the individual: in fact, in spite of the paradoxes, frustrations, and contradictions in human experience, the devout Christian believes in an overruling power outside the operation of which nothing can exist.

Secondly, there is the alleged operation of Providence on the national scale. This is exemplified in the Hebrew conception of national destiny: what might be called an ethnocentric view of Providence. The Hebrews are the chosen people, the vehicle of divine redemption in history. God summons Abraham from Ur; this is followed, later, by captivity in Egypt and then by the consolidation of the Mosaic theocracy. From the Eighth to the sixth century Israel becomes the centre of political conflict, confined between Assyria and Egypt, who were engaged in the ancient version of power-politics which does not differ substantially from the modern type. Cyrus King of Persia is considered to be God's instrument for the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire, when the latter has served its purpose, and from the time of the Return the Jews still regard themselves as a divinely appointed vehicle of God's redemptive purpose, though at the same time they are aware of an invincible frustration which denied them the fulfilment of their historical destiny, resulting in that kind of wishful thinking and day-dreaming known as apocalyptic. In the later Isaianic writings, as in the other late prophetic books, Jerusalem becomes, in imagination, the focal point of history (as it was destined to be, but in a wholly different sense) and yet, as Berdyaev points out,

the Jews were indeed denied the possibility of existing in an independent state. The passionate desire to realize their terrestrial kingdom had ultimately produced the opposite result, namely, that the Jews were denied the common heritage of those other people, whose thirst for the realization of a kingdom on earth was so much less.¹

¹ *The Meaning of History*, Bles, 1936, p. 99.

Providence, operating on a wider scale, presents its inscrutable aspect. Yet the Jews regarded Providence as taking a special interest in them as a people, and according to the authorized Book of Daily Prayer they still do. In a more curious way the beliefs of the British Israelites, the *Testament* of the Japanese Foreign Minister Tanaka, and the utterances of Adolf Hitler show evidence of the notion that Providence has special parts for certain nations to play.¹ Similarly, both Greece and Rome, for those who desire to see a positive striving towards unity in human history, have had a clear-cut contribution to make to the life of civilization.

Thirdly, there is a general or universalist idea of Providence, based on faith rather than knowledge, on imagination or intuition rather than on historical data. It is the product of the very human demand that life must disclose purpose and an ultimate underlying unity, and is due to an optimism which seeks to overcome and transcend frustration and tragedy as well as to a genuine desire to discover in history a definite pattern. The universalist idea of Providence holds that a power presides over the affairs of men, guiding them now and then by intervention in the course of history, now using an Alexander, a Julius Cæsar, a Charlemagne, a Napoleon, or a Christ. Universal history, in so far as we can speak about it at all, implies a convergence of historical streams, a certain sense of unity and direction which can hardly be thought of as accidental and unpremeditated. The Creative Evolution of Bergson, the Emergent Evolution of Lloyd Morgan, and the Holistic Evolution of Field-Marshal Smuts, all imply a fundamental structure and a striving towards wholeness, which, on the political level, is illustrated by the many blue-prints of the co-operative world-society of the future. Life, on the whole, is not patternless. In the last resort, the attribution of creativeness and orderly impulse to a vague "life-force" is nonsensical, for such a "force" cannot be blind or impersonal: creativity and the striving towards order are not impersonal processes. Even if the primitive organisms are unaware of organic striving it does not mean that the ultimate impulse behind such striving is unconscious.

Yet the difficulties raised by the idea of Providence as we endeavour to work out an interpretation of history are very considerable. For example: things happen over which there is apparently no control, and which exhibit what A. N. Whitehead calls the "senseless side of history," such as the Lisbon earthquake of 1746 which shook the optimism of the eighteenth century and was partly instrumental in prompting Voltaire to write *Candide* as a counterblast to Leibnitz's attempt to show that this is the best of all possible worlds. The problems of pain, frustration, and natural calamity oblige us to accept any doctrine of Providence with extreme caution, and if Providence intervenes at certain points in history, why not at others? Why is natural calamity allowed to destroy the fruit of the enterprise of a generation? Why are there

¹ There is an illuminating passage in Bismarck's *Memoirs* in which the German statesman describes a conversation which he had with the general Von Roon after the publication of the Ems telegram at the occasion of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war. After Bismarck had explained with glee how he intended to take advantage of the situation in order to provoke the war, Roon replied: "The good God still lives and won't let us go down in disgrace (*der alte Gott lebt noch und wird uns nicht in Schande verkommen lassen*)."
Gedanken und Erinnerungen, popular edition, Leipzig, 1935, pp. 183-4.

setbacks to what might well be called the "intentions" of Providence? It is true that the eruptions of Vesuvius have preserved for posterity considerable evidence of the architecture and social life of Roman Italy, that the earthquakes at San Francisco and Messina gave people an opportunity for building better houses; but this would seem to be a most arbitrary activity on the part of Providence, and one on which those contemporary with such events would not be tempted to look with sympathetic understanding. Again: for those who believe in the providential ordering of the affairs of the world the global war may be irrefutable evidence of God saying to man: "You would not achieve political unity by peaceful methods. Russia, America, Britain: you would not fulfil My purpose of producing world-unity out of disorder. Therefore I have hurled you into this turmoil: this is your last chance. What you would not do of your free will I am forcing you to do through pain and sorrow." Japan and Germany might therefore be regarded as the scourges of God, dynamic impulses which paradoxically thwart and further the Divine intention. The craving to discover meaning and order drives some to such a conclusion; and who can deny that it is at any rate a permissible interpretation of the colossal movements which, we trust, will in time result in the emergence of a universal world-historical sense in man which will supersede the parochialism which has hitherto dominated his political life? As we survey the scene of history and examine the idea of progress we are bound to agree with Wendland that "each advance of man's rule of the world brings with it a fresh form of the demonic"; but the fact remains that there are advances, even if, incomprehensibly, it seems, there are also periodic setbacks.

Into the ultimate issues involved in these questions I do not propose to enter, nor am I minimizing the extreme difficulties which are inherent in them; for one must admit that there is something paradoxical and irrational in the Christian belief in Providence. It does not, as does Christian or any other eschatology, or a yearning for the realization of the Kingdom of God outside or within time, wholly rest upon the awareness of tension between what is and what should be. It is an act of faith directed towards a mystery, but is nevertheless relevant to a Christian approach to the problems of history, civilization and politics.

3

Now, the postulate of Providence, if tenable, makes inevitable the consideration of the purpose or teleological character of history as a whole and of civilizations as parts of the pattern. And here is concentrated the whole problem of the Christian or any other interpretation of history; it is a problem because the end or purpose of history is no more capable of precise definition than is the final destiny of the individual. Any attempt to infer what may be the purpose behind history must have in it the element of faith.

We are faced, in the first place, with the time-factor; for civilization, that is, history as the sum-total of human values and institutions, of events as they are known to have occurred during the period to which historiography applies, is young: little more than six thousand years old. If history is, as it has been

described, the "field of divine action" (that is, of Providence), there are several fields in which such action, if there was any, has either ceased or has no discoverable function when considered in relation to later "history." Historic periods have been brought to an end, and the problem of decay and disintegration present no less a problem for the philosopher and the theologian than does the end, or purpose, of history. As to the future of the historical process, the indefinite prolongation of the time-series would cause us to ask whether we can be anything but agnostic about it. There are no data in history which can provide the basis for a forecast of what may happen: the two elements of the incalculability of Providence and the stupidity of man being enough in themselves to warn us against any desirably optimistic imaginings as to what might be the future conditions of life on this planet. There must be, we believe, a "realm of ends," though such a realm is demanded by faith and reason rather than by the data of history.

The problem of arrested civilizations, again, is a check to an over-hasty desire to read perfectionism, or what Dr. W. R. Inge has called "meliorism," into history. The Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt was followed by nearly two thousand years of stagnation, and the great monuments by which Egyptian culture is remembered are the Pyramids, which, contrary to the æsthetic and philosophical legacy of Greece, are as static and as useless as any human creation can be. They are the mausolea of a civilization. If it be said that history without purpose is meaningless, it can be replied that certain periods of history are, as far as we can say, meaningless, except as an object of study for archeologists and anthropologists. If the conquests of Alexander the Great and the pacification of the post-Alexandrian world by Julius Cæsar and Augustus were responsible for the transmission of culture, the conquests of a Tamerlane and a Genghis Khan, the arid extension of the rule of the Ottoman Turks, have in them no creative potentiality, and threatened its extinction. Little more can be said about them than that they provided a stimulus to the Christian and political consciousness of the Polish Kingdom as a bulwark against their meaningless aggression.

Now, purpose implies meaning, and meaning significance in relation to something else. A thing must be significant in relation to something outside itself. Early Mexican cultures, for example, have in this sense no "meaning." But some events, such as the discovery of the Indies by Columbus, the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of Athenian democracy, have had repercussions not on one generation or nation but upon the general current of history and the interaction of cultures. The world is different from what it would have been had they never happened. The modern world might have been quite different from what it is if the infiltration of Eastern culture had not been stopped at the battle of Actium. Goethe perceived a similar significance in the battle of Valmy in 1792: "From this place and from this day forth commences a new era in the world's history." Some events, then, appear to be charged with a significance which extends far beyond the moment of their occurrence; they are capable of interpretation in the light of the subsequent course of history. The movement of races, the space-time sense of Western man, the moments at which great historical decisions have been taken and successfully carried out are historical factors of the greatest importance because

they have contributed enormously to the development of man's awareness of the world in which he lives. Yet in themselves they do not point to what the Christian sets out to discover as the "purpose" of history.

On the one hand, then, we are faced with certain facts which it seems impossible to interpret; and on the other with other facts and experiences which lead to belief in a teleological universe: the ascending levels of life, mind, and spirit; the experience of beauty and its expression in artistic forms; decisive historical events which give a new direction to the course of history. Mind, value, action: here we have three factors of the utmost importance. Mind, we believe, cannot emerge by itself; value is something higher than utility, and independent of it; action, which we can think of in the widest possible sense as including all creative and inventive effort as well as, say, a military turning-point: these suggest purpose, but without suggesting any purpose in particular. For Christian theism this is not sufficient; the Christian wishes to know that the historic process is leading towards the realization of a free commonwealth, a secular form of the Kingdom of God. We yearn for "ends" which will make sense of the curious movements, the setbacks, the conflagrations which mark the great moments of history.

This implies an act of faith. We cannot know: we can only hope that history does contain a *telos*, an end, or points the way to one; we can hope, in the words of St. Paul, "that the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth until now."

What, then, do we mean when we speak of the teleological character of history?

4

First of all, we mean that history should have some end: on the sacred level "the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves;" and on the secular level the realization of an open political society. Yet any idea such as the fulfilment of an ultimate purpose within the time-process is, to our human minds, incapable of being verified, and the belief that there is such a purpose, is, as has been said, a matter not of fact but of faith. At the present moment we do not know whether Western civilization is static, disintegrating, or advancing. Even if it is advancing, which is doubtful, it is not unlikely that in the future decay may set in which will have made meaningless the supposed stage of advance.

It cannot be proved, says J. B. Bury, that the unknown destination towards which man is advancing is desirable. The movement may be progress, or it may be in an undesirable direction and therefore not progress. This is a question of fact, and one which is at present as insoluble as the question of personal immortality.¹

It is, perhaps, significant that Prof. Bury's inquiry is not into the evidence of progress but the idea of progress. It is not a question of whether we think we are progressing towards an end, but whether we know we are, and towards an end which is ascertainable; for unless we know what that end is we cannot

¹ J. B. Bury, *The History of the Idea of Progress*, Macmillan, p. 2.

know whether we are moving towards it or away from it. Indeed it is sometimes claimed that whatever evidence there is leads to the opposite conclusion.

Moreover, continues J. B. Bury, even if it is admitted to be probable that the course of civilization has so far been in a desirable direction, and such as would lead to general felicity if the direction were followed far enough, it cannot be proved that ultimate attainment depends on the human will ¹

We may reach a point beyond which there cannot be any further progress. This has happened in the past to other cultures, and may well happen to ours. Spengler's cyclic morphology is intended to show that this is so, and Toynbee, though clearly disagreeing with Spengler, is of the opinion that the avoidance of any such ultimate doom is strictly conditional. Indeed, he himself has drawn up tables similar to Spengler's in that they illustrate the rhythm of decline and fall which seems to be common to all civilizations.

Jewish eschatology postulated the teleological character of history: but the end hoped for was not realized in history. The Day of the Lord did not arrive.

Another problem for the philosopher of history is the relation of a pre-determined end to human freedom, our alternatives being a free continuous progress towards some unspecifiable but desirable end on the one hand, and on the other a predetermined end towards which human striving is being unconsciously guided. But if the latter alternative is a permissible one, what becomes of human freedom? Either the realm of freedom frustrates the realm of ends by being able to thwart the purposive intention of history, or the realm of ends renders meaningless the realm of freedom by making initiative superfluous. If the end of history is already determined, nothing that man can do will ultimately thwart it; and if man is consciously to co-operate with the purpose of history there is implied an omniscience as to what it is for which history up to the present provides no evidence. If man is free, he is free to act in such a way as to advance an end which is in conformity with his choices; but those choices are so diverse and lacking in conscious direction that it is difficult to see how they can conform to a set purpose.

In other words, history, the sphere in which Providence is active, does not provide the clue to its own enigma, nor can knowledge provide any final clue to the purpose which may be immanent in it or which may transcend it. There can be no solution of the problem along purely humanist lines, on the one hand, and without the omniscience of God, on the other, man cannot know what is in the mind of God. Man, being free, can unwittingly frustrate the purpose of God, whatever that purpose may be; and unless he knows, not just assumes, what that purpose is, he is not in a position to know whether he is thwarting it or helping it. And if God, in order to realize His purpose, overrules human freedom, then man's initiative throws no light on the assumed teleological character of history. But Freedom, and the creativeness which is the result and concomitant of freedom, are persistent factors in history, and instinctively we believe that history must have some purpose. Somehow we must find a way out of this impasse; we must find some clearer indication of what the purpose of history is or may be, before we can solve the problems

¹ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

of civilization and decide which political form is likely to prove most effective in furthering that purpose.

The Christian believes, for reasons of faith rather than of observation (though the latter plays an important part in his picture of the destiny of man), in a teleological universe: that is, one in which development is adapted to the service of some particular end, a process which presupposes a prescribed, though unknown purpose; and he is at the same time faced with the fact of freedom. He is aware of createdness and imperfection, of createdness as the consequence of a free act on the part of God, and imperfection as the result of sin and non-fulfilment; he is also aware of the fact of redemption in Christ, without which creation appears senseless, for it is through the way of redemption that escape from sin is achieved, and sin is bound up with the order of creation and of freedom. Further, just as man has been created "in the image of God," and, as has been already said, the political order must conform to the Christian doctrine of man, so the created order must have been designed (using the word in the widest possible sense) in accordance with a purpose in the mind of God. The political scene is related to the Christian doctrine of man as the historical scene is to the Christian doctrine of creation. And creation implies freedom. Without freedom there can be no creation, for the latter is the result of a free, conscious impulse. But between the original "act" of creation and the "final" state in which the primary purpose is realized there are the countless intermediary acts of free beings which give fluidity to history, and which are potentially capable of thwarting the ultimate purpose of creation and of rejecting redemption.

5

It is the concept of freedom which provides the meeting place of politics and theology, and in the free transmission of creative ideas is to be the common ground of political democracy and a Christian society of the "sons of God." To quote A. N. Whitehead again: "The progress of humanity can be defined as the process of transforming society so as to make the original Christian ideals increasingly practicable for its individual members." This progress may be a continuous approximation to a state which lies beyond time; but for the purpose of the philosopher of history if such a state is not realizable within time, it should at least be an ideal which can be brought nearer by the proper selection of the most fitting political instrument; and by being "brought nearer" I mean in the sense of qualitative achievement rather than the overtaking of a fixed point ahead. Finality is in any case a static concept, whereas history is kinetic and dynamic. The Christian hope is no longer eschatological, anticipating a winding-up of the temporal order by an act of God; rather is it, to use Berdyaev's term, "transfiguration:" such transfiguration as is achieved by transformation of chaos into order, darkness into light, slavery into freedom, the evil will into the good will, of non-being into being through the agency of creativeness, through the act of creation, which involves freedom.

For it is freedom, not the predetermined goal of history, a goal known only to God (and perhaps not even to Him, if history for God is a vast experiment

with time without an ascertainable outcome; certainly not to man), which provides the key to whatever understanding of history and civilization is possible to us. It does not open all the doors, for some are for ever closed: such is the impenetrable element of mystery in life. But it is an essential and significant factor. It is freedom which St. Paul opposes to law, and which, in the liberal-democratic view, is opposed to compulsion; which is at the root of the fact of sin, and which places so much of human destiny in the hands not of God but of man. The Old Testament opens with a free creative act on the part of God: with God's free activity in bringing being out of non-being; and the New Testament opens with another free creative act, the Incarnation. In the light of this fundamental Christian doctrine and of the progressive drama of creation and redemption, one can do no less than assume that the Divine Intention is the creation of a community of spiritually free agents.

6

Contemporary Protestant theology conceives of civil life as consisting of various divinely ordained "orders" under which men and women are destined to live. In so far as the New Testament can give any guidance on this question it, too, regards the political order as divinely provided. Without, however, committing ourselves to the general acceptance of what this involves we can say that from the standpoint of the Christian theology of politics and the Christian philosophy of civilization the political order exists by the providence of God for the purpose of organizing society according to secular principles of government and administration. The Hebrew prophets, it seems, thought of the secular order (as far as they were able to think of any such order at all) as dependent upon the will of God and living under the Word of God, Who permitted it to exist only if it furthered His divine purpose. With modifications, the person who intends to interpret history from the non-secular standpoint is obliged to share their view, which has been woven into the texture of Christian philosophy and is inseparable from any attempt to understand the world in terms of morality and theism. The political order, then, is one which can be regarded as instrumental in the furthering of the Divine purpose: the creation of free personalities in association with one another through whose creative efforts those conditions are realized which make practicable the Christian virtues and release the creative potencies of man. The ultimate aim of life may or may not be the establishment of a civil order which is the secular counterpart of the Kingdom of God: we do not know; we can only hope that it is. However that may be, we are faced with the task of so organizing society that as a political ideal an "open society" may be the goal of immediate striving. Politics, after all, is concerned not with what may lie many generations ahead or even outside "time," but with practical aims which, if not necessarily immediate, it is desirable to realize within a calculable period.¹ For Croce all history is contemporary history; and politics is concerned with forming and directing the currents of "contemporary" history, not with legislating for some moment at an indefinite point in the future, though an ultimate goal need

¹ Bismarck described politics as "*die Kunst des Möglichen*"—"the art of the possible."

not be ignored. Orthodox Communism directed itself towards the creation of conditions in which, a long time ahead, the state would "wither away." It is questionable whether the rulers of Soviet Russia have in mind at the present moment anything so improbable and remote.

Let us, then, be satisfied with certain pointers which, by an act of faith, we believe to suggest the purpose which history will disclose, and be content with the hope that it is to be interpreted in terms of freedom. The will of God is clearly not that men should be slaves but that they should be free, that the systems which are woven into our civilizations should encourage not slavery but freedom, not evil but the maximum amount of good. For unless the purpose of God implies the creation of freedom and goodness, it means nothing at all. The ways of Providence may, as we have held, be beyond our immediate understanding; God's ultimate purpose, whatever it is, is veiled, and no speculation can unveil it; but we *are* confronted with a panorama of passing pictures, with the vast canvas of the rise and fall and disintegration of cultures and civilizations. We can observe the currents of our own time and the forces which are in action, mixtures of good and evil, of reason and senselessness, purpose and haphazard concatenations of arbitrary happenings; and behind all these, in and among them, we see man striving to remain free: to overthrow the tyranny of nature and of the state; creating, building again where there has been destruction, his impulse to summon what can be from what is not being fulfilled sometimes in religious and sometimes in secular activities; but whether religious or secular, they are expressions of the many forms through which the spirit of free creativeness is at work.

The destiny of man, alternatively the purpose of history and of civilization, is to move towards a condition of life in which there is an ever increasing measure of responsible freedom: freedom of the mind and spirit achieved by the exercise of powers immanent in human life, and also, on the divine side, by a process of redemption which is offered as a free creative act of God.

It is, in the last resort, spirit, rather than form, which will be the ultimate creative factor in shaping the civilization of the future. The form, if freedom and civilization are to survive, will be the democratic state, for it is this which has in it the greatest potentiality for building an open society and promoting an association of free states. But the democracy of the future will have to be very different from what it has been in the past. As Jefferson knew well enough, a democracy which is not enlightened fails to be a true democracy; a people unconcerned about the values of life, thinking more about quantity than quality, pleasure than constructive thinking, deserves everything that the anti-democrats have said about it. There are disturbing indications that British democracy at the present time may well be inadequate to the creative tasks to be entrusted to it, for it is a democracy dragging its roots out of the true source of being: the fear and love of God. A democracy without form, without style of living, without a spiritual conception of life, will provoke an anti-democracy of the kind which Plato envisaged, for licence and social frivolity soon lead to a state of things in which the few who know what they want will wrest power from the hands of the many who do not, or who want things which are anti-social.

The spirit animating a democratic commonwealth in living association with other such commonwealths must be the creative spirit of *agapé*, with its

quest for divine truth, its dependence upon divine grace, its concern about the roots of the life of man in the divine world, the spirit of freedom redeemed from error, of forgiveness, understanding, and of peace, the quest for the truth which the Christian believes can alone make men free.

The purpose of history is that this spirit should be incorporated in human institutions, and to men is given both the will and the vision for the realization of this purpose. Whether they will ever be obedient to the vision and whether their wills will ever direct their actions in the political or any other field towards its realization, is not at present disclosed to us. The observation of history does not lead one to be very optimistic about it. But the Christian believes that this is the purpose which makes sense of history as something unfolding itself under the providence of God. Man is free to frustrate or to further His purpose: that is the terrible responsibility which God has laid upon him.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

I

IT may seem misleading to speak of the "New Testament interpretation of history," for there can be few books, at first sight, less "historical" in their attitude towards the world than the New Testament. It is true that the events of the New Testament are rooted in history, that is, they belong to a certain series of happenings which had as their situation the Mediterranean world and as their time the first century A.D. Christianity is "historical" in a sense in which "culture religions" and Hellenistic-Asiatic "mystery religions" are not historical. It is rooted in Judaism and Hellenism, in the past and in the world contemporary with it. But it was a world which knew little about "history," for the concept of "history" is a modern one, and the historical method is a modern method. Yet the New Testament may be said to "interpret" history to us because it deals with the major problems of the destiny of mankind; its concern is man under the judgment of God. And because man is being continually judged and is destined to face the judgment of God at the "Last Day" the present moment and the ultimate moment may matter a great deal, but not the past. Hence the New Testament would at first sight appear to be greatly concerned about the end of things, but not so concerned about the stage of life preceding it. Nor, apart from the book of Revelation, does it appear to be interested in World Rule as a political antagonist of the Kingdom of God; indeed, the attitude of Revelation towards the state is utterly different from that of St. Paul, who did not regard the state as such as an evil thing. For John, however, the state as then known, which was the Roman Empire, was a demonic power doomed to destruction because it fulfilled the function of Anti-Christ. The great picture in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is one of the fall of civilization as a human creation to

which God has said No. The author of the Apocalypse is not interested in world-history except as the stage on which God meets Anti-Christ, on which the drama of the rise and fall of Rome-Babylon is enacted. But even in its apparent denial of the significance of history Revelation passes a judgment on history which establishes the relationship of the author to the fact of history and may, perhaps, even suggest what for the man of to-day may be a justifiable Christian approach to the problems of civilization and of the ultimate meaning of history.

2

The New Testament is often severely eschatological¹ in outlook, which is sufficient to indicate the great gulf which separates it from the modern world. Yet we shall find it legitimate to consider the problem of eschatology from an angle which may not be irrelevant to our modern situation. The question, however, is whether a reinterpreted or, to use Sanday's phrase, a "transmuted" eschatology, bears any resemblance to what we find in the New Testament, and whether, having been so re-interpreted as to be congenial to the modern mind, it can be said to represent a New Testament contribution to the understanding of the nature and meaning of history. Is the idea of the Kingdom of God, for example, as found in the Gospels, one which can throw any light on the historical problem, and if so, how much? That the Kingdom of God is a basic idea of the New Testament cannot be denied; whether it is relevant to the problem of history as conceived by the modern mind remains to be seen. However, we will examine some aspects and interpretations of the idea of the Kingdom of God in order to discover what the New Testament has to say, if anything, about the problem under survey.

Much has been written about the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God: Weiss, Wrede, Schweitzer have in their turn confronted students of theology with far-reaching issues arising out of this teaching, or at any rate out of interpretations of it, and if they have done no more than remind us that the Kingdom, and Jesus' conception of it, are not to be considered in terms of nineteenth century liberal Utopianism, they have rendered services of incalculable importance to the study of New Testament thought.

Jesus conceived of his mission at first as the heralding of the Kingdom of God. He began by proclaiming its approach, and sent out his disciples to announce its imminent arrival marked by miraculous happenings; and he died as the Messiah who was the agent of the Kingdom, the proclaimer of the sovereignty of God. Yet the Kingdom was still to come; it was, too, already "there." As with the identity of the Son of Man, whose appearance did not belong to the "present" age but was to take place in the future, yet at the same time was historically manifested in Jesus, so the Kingdom was Not-Yet, but at the same time already there, breaking forth into history through his own person. "The Kingdom of God is among you," but it has not yet arrived. It is to be ushered in by the Son of Man coming on clouds of glory, yet it is

¹ I remind the reader that eschatology is the doctrine of "last things," of the end of the age.

present here and now; "If I by the finger of God cast out evil spirits, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."

Jesus does not say what the Kingdom is: he says what it is like. It is like this or that: like the seed growing secretly, independently of what man is able to do; it is like the wheat and the tares growing together until the harvest; it is like the treasure hidden in a field: it seems to have got there independently of anything that man has done but who sells all to buy the field in which he has found it; it is like the pearl of great price, or the net cast into the sea. The value of the pearl is independent of man's creation, and the fish have come into the net not through the action of man. The Kingdom is something to be entered: "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." It is a status: "He that is but little in the Kingdom is greater than John." As for the time of its coming, of its coincidence with the coming of the Son of Man, no one knows when it will be, not even the Son, only the Father. Therefore there must be readiness. "Watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour." The Kingdom of Heaven is to come with power, and in the near future, during the lifetime of the disciples, perhaps before their missionary tour has ended. It is to be accompanied by universal cataclysm, by the Woes and Afflictions of the Messianic Appearance. But it is already here, as though the already existing future outside time has pointed its finger, or extended backwards, into this present age. "Thy Kingdom Come."

In the eschatological discourses of the Synoptic Gospels there is given a picture of the Time of Affliction, of the pangs preceding and accompanying the birth of the Messianic Age. "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled. . . . Watch, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of Man." The catastrophes of the Messianic crisis are to be avoided rather than welcomed, so terrible will they be; but "he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, *and then shall the end come.*" "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

Sayings such as these may be rejected by those who believe that Jesus could not have uttered them because he was a certain kind of person; but such procedure is arbitrary. It may be possible, on critical grounds, to reject them, though there are no absolutely incontestable reasons for doing so. It may be that the apocalyptic passages embody Jewish apocalypses; and it may even be possible that Jesus embodied them himself in his discourse as he made use of passages from the Old Testament on other occasions; indeed, nothing is more likely than that Jesus, uttering prophetic judgments, should make use of the traditionally prophetic way of speaking. These synoptic apocalypses are impregnated with the Hebrew apocalyptic thought, phrases from Daniel, Isaiah, Micah occurring frequently. No doubt the "liberal" Jesus, the Jesus who is a retrojection of nineteenth century liberal humanitarianism, cannot be conceived as speaking in this manner or of holding such picturesque views about

the future of the world. The achievement of Weiss, Schweitzer and others, however, has been to show that this conception of the person of Jesus is a distortion of the proper historical perspective. For however perplexing to us may be the Synoptic conception of the Kingdom of God, nothing can be farther from our idea of the Kingdom as the political-social brotherhood which inspires the incantation of the hymns of the Co-operative Women's Guild or the happy imaginings of John Addington Symonds. The idea of the Kingdom of God as a kind of Christianized League of Nations, as a benevolent organization, was completely outside the sphere of New Testament thought. Jesus' idea of the Kingdom is by no means entirely eschatological, but the eschatological elements must not be excluded from it. They are, perhaps, the inevitable accompaniment of the sense of crisis, for in the order in which they appear in the Synoptic Gospels they are in time close to the moment of the consummation of the ministry of Jesus. The future, so to speak, casts its shadow backwards over the mind of Jesus.

Another strange notion to which we, with our modern minds, must accustom ourselves is that of the Kingdom as present and future at the same time, of being Now and Not Yet, situated in the present and coming from the beyond. This has already been mentioned, and is being mentioned again because no attempt to understand Jesus' conception of the Kingdom should ignore it. It may upset our theories of time, in so far as it is possible to hold any such theories in a comprehensible manner. If "future" and "present," "eternity" and "time," can be regarded as "simultaneous" for God, there is no reason why they should not be so for one with Divine insight into the nature of things. Indeed, all prophetism has in it something of this awareness of the future-in-the-present, of the transcendent in the immanent; and unless the New Testament is thought of as witnessing to the breaking-in of the transcendent into the present, its character is completely misunderstood.

This two-dimensional character of the Kingdom of God has been realized by recent New Testament scholars, and is implicit in the oldest of the synoptic sayings. The Kingdom of God is the irruption into this world of a transcendental order wholly different from, even opposed to, the present world-order.¹ It is "eschatological" salvation, that which places man in a state of crisis in which he has to make the final decision. The Kingdom of God is not, it is held, a *summum bonum* in the ethical sense, for if it were it would lose its absolute character. It is the promise of salvation; it is suprahistorical, supranatural in the sense that man can do nothing for or against it. It is as if a man cast seed upon the earth, and "he should sleep and rise by night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how." It is miraculous, wholly other; it cannot, however, be described with precision, for "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say Lo here! or lo there!" It is first and foremost something which depends on the activity of God, not upon man, in Bultmann's words, "a power which determines the present although it is in the future," and does so by confronting man with his moment of crisis, which is always the Ultimate Moment, the eschatological moment, from which none can escape. The Kingdom cannot be described in precise terms because human categories of thought cannot

¹ R. Bultmann, *Jesus*, Berlin, 1929, pp. 28 ff., C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, passim.

describe it. It is possible only to say what the Kingdom is *like*, not what it is. Through Jesus the Kingdom has come; the Last Things have arrived. The Wholly Other has broken into the world of man. "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God upon you." "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them." The Kingdom has nothing to do with modern humanistic notions of progress and Utopia. Indeed, the view has been expressed that it is not Jesus who brings the Kingdom but rather the Kingdom which brings him with it.¹ It belongs to the future, but it is already here. "The Kingdom of God is in your midst." It is not immanent but transcendent. Like the yeast in the meal or the seed which becomes a great tree it has small beginnings but will permeate the world. It is a mystery, a secret; hence the need for parables as a means of opening the eyes of his hearers to the nature of the mystery.

Such an understanding of the notion of the Kingdom of God as found in the Synoptic Gospels should warn us against reading into it the modern humanistic-secularist idea of the perfected society as conceived by social-political idealists. There is nothing in the gospels to suggest that this is to be the character of the Kingdom of God. The difficulty for the modern man, however, is to realize the relevance of Jesus' idea of the Kingdom to the contemporary historical situation. Nothing, for example, is further removed from modern ways of thinking than the apocalyptic passage in Mk.xiii, with its vivid vision of the stars falling from heaven and the heavenly powers being shaken. "Verily I say unto you: this generation shall not pass away until all these things are accomplished." Yet nobody, not even Jesus himself, knows when the eschatological moment is to come: "not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." It is an event in the undetermined future, and yet it is so imminent that it will come within the lifetime of his own generation. There is little doubt that Jesus somehow visualized the coming of the Kingdom *after* the cataclysmic destruction of the present world-order. Whereas we, bringing modern notions about progress and evolution to bear upon the idea of the Kingdom tend to visualize a gradual improvement, a continuous getting better and better, Jesus took the entirely opposite view. Just as Marx imagined the arrival of the Communist state as the culmination of a process of increasing and unbearable misery suffered by the working class, giving to the revolutionary moment a thoroughly eschatological significance, so did Jesus believe that the Kingdom would come after things had become so bad that they could not possibly get any worse.² The Kingdom will be preceded by a time of troubles and limitless anxiety and it is, we assume, to

¹ "The Kingdom of God is and remains for Christ the severely future eschatological Kingdom coming at the end of the world-order, and following the Messianic woes and divine judgment. But that which distinguishes his own eschatology from previous ones is that he himself perceives it with his own eyes as already there and in a state of growth, knowing that he is the instrument of powers which have already made themselves felt." R. Otto, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn*, Munich, 1934, p. 123.

² "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity. . . . men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking for those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. . . . When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is near at hand." *Luke*, xxi, 25 ff.

be equated with God's offer of salvation and with his final triumph over the forces of evil and death and darkness. In such a vision there is nothing that can be dimly related to modern ways of thinking, but we must not therefore, as did the liberal theologians of the last century and the modernists of this, dismiss it as a later interpolation until there is enough evidence that it is an interpolation. The Kingdom is obviously, for Jesus, not to be regarded as a heavenly city on earth, as a *polis* or a *politeia*, or a *Civitas Dei*. It is nothing so definite, so concrete, so analysable, associated with human forms of government and organization. It is not a *polis* but a *basileia*: the Aramaic word was *maikuth*, the "sovereignty" of God. Perhaps the now familiar German word *Reich*, with its somewhat mystical colouring (not *Königtum*—kingdom) is a better word than our term kingdom: the *Reich* of God, the realm in which He is Lord of the New Cosmos, which is to replace the present aeon. "Thy Kingdom come:" but nevertheless, "Thy Will be done."

The Kingdom, then, is something breaking in from beyond upon this life: the irruption, as Berdyaev puts it, of Eternity into Time. It is not to be wondered at that Jesus does not offer a legislative idea of the Kingdom, describing the kind of social or economic order which should be set up. The Kingdom is seldom an *It Is*: it is an *As if*. We are not told much about its content, save that it is God's doing and therefore must be infinitely precious; it is, in some way, at any rate in some contexts, associated with the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus is the eschatological moment made personal: he is the herald of the Kingdom, its active agent, the bridge between the Other World and the world which we know. As the Son of Man of Jewish apocalyptic he is a transcendental figure of supranatural stature, for he drives out devils not by his own power but by the finger of God, the finger reaching from Eternity into Time.

Such is the impression left on the mind by him who summons man to repentance because the Kingdom of God is "at hand" as well as "in your midst." It is doubtful, however, whether St. Paul, in spite of his strongly eschatological thinking, was familiar with such a conception of the Kingdom in the futurist sense, for when he mentions it, it is not as something transcendental, but as consisting of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These new Christian virtues are the creation of the Holy Spirit in the world, and they are to be practised in human society; they are the cement which must hold this human society together.

There is danger in interpreting the Kingdom as Jesus conceived it in too futuristic and transcendental terms, as Bultmann and Otto and others have done, for this lays New Testament Christianity open to the charge of being so other-worldly that it has little if anything to say about the problems of the nature and meaning of history and about the place which the political order should occupy in a divinely-governed universe. The transcendence of the Kingdom is over-emphasized at the expense of its immanence. History is sacrificed to the more-than-historical; whereas the New Testament is desperately concerned with the task of the redemption not only of the individual soul but with the "historical." Yet throughout there is this insistent emphasis that it is through the other-dimensional that this world is to be redeemed. The Synoptic narrative is the story of the manifestation of God in history, of

the Kingdom of God on the historical plane, and in this way the immanence of the Kingdom in the life of Jesus is of crucial significance for the destiny of mankind. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Supreme authority has been entrusted to Jesus by the Father. For the author of the Fourth Gospel that which matters supremely is the manifestation of the Eternal Word in the process of history. This is, of course, the substance of the Synoptic Gospels as well. Yet in the Fourth Gospel, as in the other Johannine writings, we are aware of an element of tension which is absent from the Synoptics. It is of importance to our inquiry to discover what is the nature of this tension and the light which it throws upon the problem of history. For we can say with justification that it is in the light of the tension between the Eternal and the temporal that both the nature and the redemption of the historical process are to be understood.

3

"The Fourth Gospel," wrote the late Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, "describes an ultimate present tension, the tension between flesh and Spirit, between Death and between death and Life, between darkness and Light, between Jesus and His disciples and the World, between those who believe and know and see and those who neither believe nor know, but are blind; in fact, the Fourth Gospel describes the tension between God and men. It vibrates and sets in motion at the point where trembling and arrogant human life is met by the Life that is eternal; at the point where men are confronted by Jesus, son of man and Son of God."¹

And he is right in insisting that the evangelist's emphasis is upon the flesh of Jesus, that is, upon the historical manifestation of the Word. Indeed, John is "acutely aware of the problem of history . . . not because it formed an important chapter in a disciplined philosophy, but on account of the historical fact of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth."²

The Prologue to the Gospel is in itself a theology of history. The created order is sustained by the Eternal Word who summoned it into being at a point far beyond the limits of chronological time. The Word was not audible for the first time in Jesus but was made known in the creation from its beginning, from the first molecular formations of whirling gas and in the pre-historical world of nature. All things were made by the Word; not by the historically manifested Christ, but by the Word which *became* the Christ of history. God is the ultimate principle of causality, despite modern philosophical-mathematical attempts to get rid of the idea of causality. The temporal, the scene of history, is inseparably related to the Eternal through the fact of creation and the appearance of the Word in a historic personality. The World has been created by God, but it is evil,³ and therefore has to be redeemed. Somehow history has taken the wrong turn; it is twisted and vitiated. Why?

¹ *The Fourth Gospel*, I, p. 60, Faber, 1940.

² *Ibid.*, I, p. 57.

³ The Johannine dualism of the created order and the evil *kosmos* might be illustrated in contemporary terms by the contrast of "earth" and "world" in J. B. Priestley's play *Johnson over Jordan* (Heinemann), where Robert Johnson, at the end, says:

"The earth is nobler than the world we have built upon it:
The earth is long-suffering, solid, fruitful;
The world is still shifting, dark, half-evil."

Because man has through the exercise of freedom rejected the light. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, for their deeds were evil." The Evangelist, through the insight of genius (or through the light given by the Holy Spirit, which may be the same thing) has laid his finger on the heart of the problem of good and evil: men, because of their freedom, have chosen darkness; in their self-will they have isolated themselves and allied themselves with darkness, with the principle of negation and disruption. Yet the Light still shines, for the darkness did not "overcome" it.

The Evangelist now advances from the fundamental principle to the facts of history, from the general to the particular, from the suprahistorical dimension of eternal purpose and eternal activity to the realm of historical actuality, from the Eternal Word of beyond the temporal order to the Incarnate Word in Jesus of Nazareth.

John the Baptist has come to bear witness of the Light, and we know now that the Light is Jesus of Nazareth. The Evangelist traces the essential character of the conflict which is fought out in a definite place at a definite time: the rejection in general terms of the Divine Light by humanity as a whole, but more particularly of the historical manifestation of the Light by a particular people who are the microcosmic pattern of human behaviour as such. Eternity and Time, God and Man, come into conflict in the relations of Jesus with Rome and Judea; but the conflict is of human, not divine, choosing. The judgment on this conflict, however, is that of God. The world is alienated from God.

Now, the Johannine concept of the "world" (*kosmos*) is likely to cause some perplexity, for John clearly suggests that the world is in essential opposition to the Divine principle and intention. But whereas this opposition is real enough, it exists *because* the world has rejected the Light. That is, the "world" is the "sum of created being which belongs to the sphere of human life as an ordered whole considered apart from God" (Westcott). "It is the sum-total of existence viewed (by abstraction) without the spiritual world. . . . It comprises all that belongs to the categories of time and place. . . . Christ prays not that His disciples may be taken out of the world, but that they may be kept from the *evil*. From this idea comes that of the world as human society as it organizes itself apart from God, hence the severe judgments passed upon the world."¹ In I John ii, 15 *ff.* the "world" is unambiguously hostile to the Divine order. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." This apparently radical opposition seems to contradict the idea of the Prologue to the Gospel that the world and "all things" were made by the Word of God and therefore belong to the Divine order as well as to that of nature and of man. What John means is doubtless that the world as we know it, the world in which demonic political forces have their sway and evil is rampant, is now in opposition to God because men have chosen

¹ W. R. Inge, in *The Dictionary of Christ and the Apostles*, I, p. 893.

darkness rather than light, things temporal rather than things eternal. Further, the coming of Jesus into the world was essentially a judgment *on* the world; for he was its Saviour, the one whose mission was to redeem it and reverse the direction which it had taken through man's abuse of his God-given freedom. "The Truth shall make you free." The Truth is Jesus and is apprehended in the acceptance of the Eternal Word, who is to guide the world back into the course originally appointed for it. Again, the disciples and the "world" stand opposed to each other. Yet the disciples are sent into it. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." It is as though the world is not the "place" which they spatially inhabit but something hostile and God-denying which is to be saved through them. In the Prologue the writer does not seem to have thought of the "world" and God in terms of mutual alienation, but rather of the one as the object of the creative activity of the other. Verse 10, however, suggests that the rejection by the world is the supreme tragedy of history: the Light was actually in the world, he was the agent of its creation; yet despite this the world rejected him. History, therefore, is a tragic drama: of tragic frustration for God and tragic self-assertion on the part of man.

But not wholly tragic, for there are some who believe, who receive the Word, and to them is given the power to become children of God and thereby to enter upon a new status. They are not "of" the world (John xvii, 6, 16), for they belong to a new order: that of the Spirit.

The Eternal Word enters upon His historical career and mission, and brings with Him the gift of Eternal Life, which redeems man from sin and saves him from condemnation.

In the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles Eternal "Life"¹ is not regarded simply as a post-mortal state of being, but something which, like the Kingdom of God in the Synoptic Gospels, can be had here and now, and the means of obtaining it is belief in Christ. The very frequency of the occurrence of the phrase and the association of the acceptance of Eternal Life with belief in Christ show that it is for the author a matter of cardinal importance. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (xvii, 3). "He that heareth my word and believeth him that sent me hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, *but hath passed into eternal life*" (v, 24). The Gospel and the Epistles abound in such sayings.

What exactly are we to understand by the phrase "eternal life"? It is at any rate something for the experience of which we do not have to wait until we have left this world. Like the Kingdom, it is both future and present, here to be had for the asking, but not unconditionally available for everyone. Like the Kingdom, it is mediated through Jesus Christ; for just as he brings to men the Kingdom of God through casting out demons, so in the Fourth Gospel the knowledge of Jesus is identical with participation in eternal life here and now. Just as the presence of the Messiah and (future) Son of Man in this world is a token of the arrival of the Kingdom, so is his dwelling among us (in John) as the Word made Flesh the assurance, on condition of belief, of

¹ The Greek word is ζωή not βίος.

the availability of eternal life. It is therefore not futuristic only but vividly present.

Perhaps we can best understand the term "eternal" (αἰώνιος) life as issuing from God through the mediatorship of Jesus: it is the Divine nature in its revealed aspect; our human share in the eternal life of God. God imparts "life" to all who believe in Jesus: that is, it is automatically received as a consequence of faith. The "death" out of which one passes into "life" through belief and in which one remains if one persists in unbelief or rejection is a condition of moral and spiritual destitution in which there is no fellowship with God but, in St. Paul's phrase, "alienation from the life of God."

This is in conformity with the New Testament teaching as a whole. For Paul Eternal Life is that which belongs to the imperishable order, whether present or future: "we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." We can, of course, define the "things which are not seen" as we wish, using the modern term "values" to cover them: the "spiritual" qualities, moral and æsthetic; and that St. Paul believed in the primacy of such qualities can be seen from his frequent lists of the things which are the fruit of the spirit. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith; the things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report: these derive from the life of the spirit as distinct from the life of the natural man; and if we interpret the New Testament—that is, the witness of Apostolic Christianity—as a unity, as we are bound to do unless we do violence to it as a whole, we shall not be wrong in interpreting John in terms of Paul, and discover means of equating the two. For Paul, like John, considered Eternal Life to be a present possession; the exhortation to "lay hold on life eternal" is adequate evidence of this. Paul is a "new man" in Christ: "it is no longer I who live but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, which is in the Son of God." So Paul, who wrote before John, achieves the new life, eternal life, through Christ: the qualitative life, in its essence the permanent spiritual life of Christ-likeness. And just as Christ is the consummation of the highest human values as well as the impersonation of the Divine life, so does he impart these values *here and now* to those who believe in him.

To sum up: the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel represent the Kingdom of God and Eternal life as the breaking-in, through the coming of Jesus, of the Eternal into the historical plane of existence: the other-dimensional making its impact upon the order of this world, bringing with it a spiritual force and a complex of spiritual values which alone can transfigure, transform, and redeem the world, which is the scene of Eternity's wrestling with Time. The Kingdom is not of this world, but it is in it.

4

There is little in the New Testament to suggest that St. Paul had anything to contribute to the Christian understanding of history which is not implied in other New Testament writings. In Acts 19, in the Athenian discourse,

he shows that he shares, or at any rate reproduces with approval, what is substantially a Stoic view of creation and of the essential unity of mankind.¹ It is the "life and breath" provided by God for the sustenance of life, the geographical and political limitations placed upon human societies, which constitute the conditions under which organized life is lived, but not that it may be lived as the expression of pure successiveness. Life has purpose, which is the search for God and His discovery. Until the Christian revelation God was prepared to overlook human error; but now the "times of ignorance" have passed, and the meaning and end of life have been revealed in Jesus Christ. The age in which Paul's contemporaries are living is the Messianic age, the age of fulfilment, the age not merely of *chronos* but of *kairos*. Paul uses these two terms, in the main, to distinguish between time which is duration and time which has meaning, quality, full of opportunity, the "right" time: the fulness of times (Eph. i, 10), redeeming the time—"buying up the opportunity" (Col. iv, 5), "as we have the opportunity" (Gal. vi, 10). In one place, however (Gal. iv, 4) Paul uses *chronos* where in Ephesians he uses *kairos*. It is possible that he is thinking of time as the final moment of the preparatory period of duration rather than as the beginning of a period of new historical significance. The phrase "redeeming the time" is clearly indicative of a qualitative idea of time, of time as either good or evil, requiring transfiguration.

There is, however, in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans something more than the belief that the past has been fulfilled in the present, and that is a forward look into the future in which the ultimate purposes of good for creation will be fulfilled. Here St. Paul confronts us with a grand conception of the final purposes of God. The present age is incomplete and imperfect, and creation shares with humanity this incompleteness and this imperfection, existing in a state of corruption and frustration. "The whole creation groans and travails in pain until now," this creation which waits "with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed" (Moffatt). There will come a time, in the distant future, when the "present suffering" will give place to the revelation of the sons of God and the futility of creation will have been superseded by the clarification of God's ultimate purpose for the universe. Paul does not suggest why God subjected creation to futility, despite the hope that it, as well as man, would "one day" be freed from its thralldom to evil and decay and be allocated its proper place in God's system; nor does he offer any picture of the character of this ultimate consummation; he wisely restricts himself to the general postulates of faith. He knows, however, that those who have been called by God "have His aid and interest in everything" (Moffatt; A.V.—"all things work together for good to them that love God"), and that nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is the organizing principle of the universe. Paul, always a daring and imaginative thinker, here reaches the limit of both thought and imagination, boldly throwing out this conception of the ultimate destiny of nature and of history in such a way as to give centrality to the function of Christ in the divine-human scheme. The answer to the intense crises inherent in the human situation at any time is the ultimate consummation to be brought about by God; but because each

¹ Cf. *The Hymn of Cleanthes*.

human crisis is a contemporary crisis it has to be resolved in reference to this ultimate consummation.

Although it cannot be said with confidence that St. Paul brooded over the "problem of history" if this is to be thought of as something different from the general problem of human destiny, it is clear that the orders of creation and of human life are for him meaningless apart from their theological interpretation. St. Paul was far too acute a psychologist to entertain any illusions about the demonic, self-destructive potency of history, and, if he were thinking in modern rather than in first-century-apocalyptic terms, he would doubtless have said that the "historical" is vitiated by the frustrations and perversions which are not mere passing phenomena of human nature but are inseparable from its very structure as long as men fail to see that deliverance from such frustrations and perversions can come only through submission to the will of God and co-operation with Him in the process of the fulfilment of his purposes.

The work and person of Jesus are of cosmic significance; it is these which give coherence and meaning to creation. This is the theme of the Epistle to the Colossians, where Paul again boldly seeks to establish the supremacy of Jesus over creation, representing Him at the same time as the creative spirit, focus, and consummation of all things historical and suprahistorical, as the power and principle by which the universe is made to cohere (Col. 1, 15-20). This, indeed, in one form or another, is the presupposition of any Christian approach to history. It does not solve the problem of evil, error, or accident, in history, but it does remind us that until history and the human impulses which direct it are brought into conformity with the ultimate purposes of God as the Christian by faith apprehends them civilization is doomed to further decay and disruption.

One cannot expect a nicely formulated philosophy of history in the writings of St. Paul, for they were not philosophical treatises but pastoral letters, though pastoral letters which dealt with the profoundest issues involved in any examination of the nature of man both as an individual and in relation to society and the vaster dimension of human history. It is the genius of Paul to have contributed to our appreciation of these issues as he perceived them within the framework of the historical and religious situation of his own age. More than this no man can do, and in making this approach he was acting in common with the other New Testament writers. He shares with them the conviction that the "present" age (his own) is determinative for the future of human life as well as interpretative of its past, and that only through the action of God from the dimension of Eternity is the purpose of this world to be understood and its secret disclosed.

The historical significance of the New Testament understanding of life is made clearer when the contemporary religious background to it is considered, for much of what St. Paul wrote was designed to offer to the first generations of Christians in danger of relapsing into paganism a conception of life fundamentally different from the fatalism which oppressed them. The Hellenistic age was an age of popular superstition and astral fatalism. "Astrology fell on the Hellenistic mind," says Gilbert Murray, "as a new disease falls upon some remote island people. Everybody was ready to receive the germ."¹

¹ *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, Oxford, p. 177.

Of this there is some evidence in the New Testament. Astrology, planet-worship, came originally from Babylon, and was widespread at the beginning of the Christian era. Even the Stoics were sympathetic towards it, and St. Paul's congregations at Ephesus and Colossae seem to have been strongly attracted by this kind of religion, as is clear from the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers (cosmocrats) of the darkness of this world:" that is, the astral powers who rule human life and under whose government there is no real freedom. Paul doubtless believed in these unseen cosmic intelligences but differed from his contemporaries in that he believed that Christ, the supreme lord of spirits, could protect the Christian against them and release them from obedience to astral necessity, *Haimarméne*. In the letter to the Colossians, too, there is the same shadowy background; fear of darkness, of principalities, of powers. It is an unfamiliar world, one very difficult for us to enter even in imagination, governed by the Seven Deathless Cosmocrats, the "world-rulers," in St. Paul's phrase, in which the planets become elements (*stoicheia*) and elements are equated with demons. In this strange world there is no freedom but only Necessity and Fate. The stars were the real gods; they, the all powerful astral forces, were the objects of veneration, the invisible gods moving in the world above, the truly divine world, upon which human destiny was dependent.¹ It is doubtless to these that St. Paul refers in the Epistle to the Galatians:

How be it, that, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods, but now, after ye have known God, or rather are known to God, how ye turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.²

In the same chapter Paul uses the expression "bondage under the elements of the world,"³ which accurately describes the content of this star-fatalism. The word for "elements" (*stoicheia*) came to mean "supernatural powers."

¹ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 2nd. ed., pp. 185 ff. In the chapter on Angelology in his *Religion des Judentums im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* Bousset maintains that belief in "demons" and stars was a characteristic of late Judaism, pp. 368 ff; also chapter VII on Dualism and Demonology, pp. 381 ff.

Professor Gilbert Murray thus summarizes the widespread fear of astral powers: "Here on earth we are the sport of Fate; nay, on earth we are worse still. We are beneath the moon, and beneath the moon there is not only Fate but something even more malignant: Chance. Above the moon there is no chance, only necessity; there is still the will of the six other Kosmokratores, Rulers of the Universe. But above them there is an eighth region—the home of the Ultimate God, whatever he is named, who was before the Cosmos. In this is true being and freedom. Though the Kosmokratores cast us to and fro like their slaves or dead chattels, in soul at least we are of equal birth to them." (Ibid., pp. 179-80.) Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard has shown that similar astrological ideas formed an essential element in the Elizabethan outlook, and survived, at any rate in literary form, as late as *Paradise Lost*. (*The Elizabethan World Picture*, pp. 35 ff., Chatto and Windus, 1943.) The angelic hierarchy of *Paradise Lost* is almost the same as the *kosmokratores* of the hellenistic religions and of Ephesians VI. Milton, in his *Arcades*, wrote lines in which the belief is expressed that life is somehow ordered and affected by the planets in their courses:

"Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie
To dull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep th' unsteady nature to her law,
And the low world in measur'd motion draw
After the heavenly tune, when none can hear
Of human mould the gross unpurg'd ear."

² Gal. iv, 9.

³ Gal. iv, 3.

This world-view, which Paul considered to be superseded by the Christian, is coldly deterministic. It does not depict a realm in which freedom can be exercised: it implies a soulless fatalism, the government of life by arbitrary forces so that man has no control over his own decisions. The Christian revelation has rendered obsolete such a view (which makes history meaningless) by showing that God has intervened in His Son, appearing on the stage of history to give freedom to man and bring him release from bondage to the astral powers. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Consciously or unconsciously, Paul substitutes the historical interpretation of life for the non-historical, for where there is no freedom, that is, where there are no human decisions, there is no history. It is in contrast to the Hellenistic view of the world that the New Testament understanding of life and its interpretation of human destiny are seen to be so startlingly reasonable, in spite of the Gospel being for the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness.

Thus, unless we are forcing too modern an interpretation upon this ancient document, we can say that for its author, as for all who have approached the problem of history from the two-dimensional planes of Time and Eternity, the present world is to be interpreted in terms of the Other; the realm of Time, which passes, is given its value by the realm of Eternity, of the permanent and the unchanging, which provides the fixed standards by which the passing phases of this world are to be judged. This is in conformity with the general principle of the Christian interpretation of history which, in its modern as in its earlier forms, is rooted in the New Testament.

5

The strange writing known as the Epistle to the Hebrews has many features which are common to the outlook of other New Testament writers, especially St. Paul, though at first sight it is concerned with matters which appear to have little relevance to a modern examination of the question of the interpretation of history. With its Christology and the peculiar approach which its unknown author has adopted we are not here concerned. There are, however, one or two points which should be noted *because* they bear witness to the common New Testament conception of fulfilment. God has spoken of "old time" to the prophets (the period which Paul describes as "times eternal") but has "at the end of these days" finally spoken through His Son, who is not only His spoken Word but the incarnate agency of creation, as he is for John and Paul. The new age is about to begin, indeed it has begun, through the new Word which has been uttered. The New Era coincides with the end, with the last, of the "old" days; in that sense the eschatological age has actually begun, and the Kingdom of God is upon us.

Although nothing is known either about the source or the destination of the Epistle, there are several suggestions in it of contact with Hellenistic thought, of the synthesis of the Hebraic and Greek elements. The emphasis on the cosmic significance of the Son in relation to creation has obvious affinities with the Fourth Gospel and with the Epistle to the Colossians. Jesus is what Philo of Alexandria called the "firstborn of God," "the first

of the Angels." Like the Logos (Word) in Philo's philosophy, he is the dynamic and cosmic principle accounting for the origin of the world, the Creative Word, the "effulgence of His glory." Indeed, the phrases of the opening verses of the Epistle are more than faintly reminiscent of the thought-world of the Hellenistic period: "whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom He also made the worlds; who, being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of his power . . . being made so much better than the angels." It is, perhaps, unnecessary to assume that the author wrote consciously under the influence of Philo; it is enough to suggest that he was using the thought-categories of his age, applying them to the Christian context. The phrase "a copy and shadow of heavenly things," however, seems to owe much to Platonism or Neo-Platonism. The present world is ephemeral, for the real meaning of existence is to be found not in it but in the "city which is to come." This world is a kind of pattern of the ideal world which is the only truly enduring one; it is also the realm of the "things that are shaken, as of things that are made," for the realm of the unshaken, the unchanging, is the "kingdom which cannot be moved."

The author of the Epistle, however, does not disparage this world, which is the realm of history. It is through "faith" that we "understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God," that creation was a divine meaningful act, even though there is something unsubstantial and apparent about the created world. It is not in itself ultimate, for the "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Yet history is the realm in which faith is to be displayed. The patriarchs were men of faith; they belonged to the historical realm; the Jewish martyrs were involved in the persecution of the faithful by the powers of this world. It is through them that historical continuity is achieved, for "without us they should not be made perfect."

6

The other writing to which we must turn in order to appreciate the New Testament understanding of history is the Book of Revelation, which disturbingly combines vivid apocalyptic vision with a profound sense of the judgment of God upon human institutions. For this John the "world" is evil, as it is, in a sense, for the Evangelist; not only because of man's abuse of freedom as a spiritual principle but because naked power challenges God and persecutes the Church. World-rule is the dominion of anti-Christ; its lord is Satan, and Empire is its political manifestation, opposed to the will of God. Previous empires have fallen—Egypt, Sodom, Babylon, Persia, and Greece; the sixth, which now is, is Rome, and is likewise doomed. A seventh is to follow; the eighth is also represented by the Beast, and is the incarnation of world-empire. From beginning to end there is no suggestion in the book that world-rule is anything other than the supreme manifestation of wickedness. Political power as such is radically evil. And in this, as has been already noted, John's view differs completely from that of Paul, who regarded the civil power as God's agent for the maintenance of order.

This view of the world has clearly very grave faults. The world is evil, according to John; its redemption is not possible: it can only be judged and destroyed. Perhaps John should not be blamed for interpreting the world in terms of Nero and Domitian: he was too close to them to think of them as anything other than the incarnation of brute power and godlessness. But in his attitude towards the place of the Church in the world he is wrong. He sees in the church not a community which is in the world to purify it but something which can have no contact with it because it is so utterly different from it. The Eternal enters into relation with history only through condemnation. In this sense the author of Revelation might be described as anti-historical, for history according to this interpretation has no significance. John does not even sorrow over a world which has so seriously missed its way: he exults over its downfall in one of the most magnificently rhetorical passages in the Bible, and he does not envisage any better political order taking its place: only the *consummation* of history, which is a terrible act of God, has meaning.

Like the Gospels, Revelation conceives of the end of the world in eschatological terms. The universal catastrophe of the Synoptic apocalypses overtakes the whole created order before the millennial reign of the saints. The New Order is not a human creation but the holy city coming down from heaven, from the wholly other dimension. Eternity has superseded Time and has made it meaningless.

In so far as history has any meaning for John it is to be found not in human systems, which can be, and usually are, a denial of God, but in the sovereignty of God. Although Revelation is a tract for the times, and a powerful one, it should not be taken too literally, for there is a timelessness about it which makes it belong to all time. In its vision of the end of things, of the divine consummation of history, it is outside time; time and eternity, heaven and hell and earth, mingle with each other inextricably. John knew well enough that what he had written had not happened in time and would never do so; but his beliefs that the New Jerusalem would come not from man but from God, that the end of history is divinely appointed, that the Kingdom of God will, within or outside history, assert itself by the will of God, are thoughts which again and again, as we have seen, recur in the Christian interpretation of history. It is not the New Testament writers alone who foreshadow a catastrophic end to history. Berdyaev, Soloviev, Niebuhr, and others of our modern age have done so.¹ What this catastrophic end precisely means is not easy to determine, but it is closely bound up with the thought that the purpose of history will not be fulfilled within "historical" time.

¹ Including, now, Mr. H. G. Wells, of all people, whose *Mind at the End of its Tether*, 1945, is a pitiful comment on the sufficiency of the scientific outlook which he has advocated for half a century. "Our universe," says Mr. Wells, "is not merely bankrupt. There remains no dividend at all; it has not simply liquidated; it is going clean out of existence, leaving not a wrack behind. The attempt to trace a pattern of any sort is absolutely futile. . . . The writer sees the world as a jaded world devoid of recuperative power." He is aware of the imminent end of things and holds "the hard conviction of the near conclusivé end of all life." "The unknowable has set its face against us." Compared with Mr. Wells' eschatology that of the New Testament was hopeful, for it offered something beyond and above cosmic catastrophe. Mr. Wells offers us nothing.

The authors of the New Testament are convinced that the lives of men and nations are given significance through God's mighty acts in Jesus Christ and that civilization will be judged by its acceptance or rejection of God. The great theme of the early Christian preaching, as Prof. C. H. Dodd has pointed out, is that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the final age, the "last things" have come. The arrival of the Word made Flesh is, in effect, the end of the age and the beginning of the new age, the new æon, for God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." In this act of God is seen the real eschatological moment, conceived by the Hebrew prophets in mythical-pictorial terms and often described as the Day of the Lord which is the fulfilment of history, the moment when God's judgment is passed on history. The great event of the New Testament is the divine event, determinative and never-to-be-repeated, that which is to be described as the "fullness of time," identified with the incursion of the Kingdom of God into the world of history. This is the permanent element in eschatology, the doctrine of Last Things, of the "Last" interpreted in terms of energy and quality and significance rather than in the literal sense of something happening at the last moment of the time-series called history. That is really the meaning of the prophetic or Kingdom-of-God view of history.

Can we not, therefore, if we accept this interpretation of New Testament eschatology, think of the Kingdom in qualitative rather than quantitative (that is temporal), terms, which, by the introduction of historical "time," tend to confuse us? As Dr. C. H. Dodd has suggested, time-measurement is here irrelevant, for an absolute end to history is simply a fiction invented to express the reality of teleology within history.¹ In other words, the precise moment at which Jesus announced the Kingdom is not the most important consideration; nor is the time, imminent, present, or remotely distant, of its coming. What does matter is that the *new thing* did come into the world, and that the Kingdom was then and is now "in the midst of you."

Let us repeat: the New Testament interpretation of the Kingdom of God expresses something which we in this humanistic age are in danger of forgetting: the Kingdom of God is something from beyond. Bultmann and Otto are to that extent right in their interpretation of the New Testament conception of the Kingdom. "Christianity is not refreshment bars and swimming-pools: it is the soul in the presence of God," Baron von Hugel once said to a Christian business friend who was enlarging upon the up-to-date organization of his factory with its clinics, welfare department, swimming pools, and so forth.² The New Testament bears this out, for it speaks of the impingement of another dimension upon this world, not of social idealism. It speaks not of progress, but of the activity of God, which may be gradual or catastrophic, but which, whatever its form or speed, involves judgment on human striving. The future of human history does not depend on the dreams out of which it is hoped a commonwealth of men will be woven. The eloquent words of the great

¹ *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development*, p. 201.

² Quoted by Sir A. E. Zimmern, *Spiritual Values and International Affairs*, Oxford, 1939.

industrialist and German Foreign Minister,¹ Walther Rathenau, may inspire one to adopt an attitude of reverence towards the utopian hopes of a man of vision, but they do not show us the way to the redemption of history from being the prey of dark, demonic powers:

The world, he wrote, is in need of a Kingdom of Man which is an image of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the soul. The Kingdom of man is the Kingdom of Freedom and Justice. The Kingdom of man is not ruled by wealth or inheritance, or tyranny or oppression, by violence or anarchy; it is ruled by solidarity. Its leaders are no longer the privileged, the place-hunters, the wire-pullers, but men of proven ability: the supreme law is not interest, but creation; the ultimate aim is not wealth and power, but spirit. The slavery of man, the slavery of rank and sex and age, is at an end.

This is wishful thinking, for we know that the Kingdom of Man is not like this, and never will be, *as long as he relies upon his own efforts* to build that Kingdom of Man which is to be the image of the Kingdom of God. Such a vision is born of pious sentiment, and is as lacking in roots as was Rathenau's own brilliant and elegant life. It is not rooted in the eternal world. The Christian belief is that only through drawing upon the dimension of the other world, of the Kingdom of God, can history be redeemed and nemesis on civilization as hitherto known avoided.

8

It has been said in these pages that history neither provides the answer to the problem of history nor discloses the clue to its own enigma. That is true as long as we remove the Incarnation from the realm of the historical. But if we regard the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as belonging to history no less than do the careers of Alexander the Great or Napoleon or Hitler it is not true. If that which is covered by the New Testament is of the very stuff of history, as the Christian believes it is, then it is there that the answer to the problems and the enigma of history is to be found. History is meaningless from the standpoint of Christian thought without the Incarnation, for it is this which gives it meaning and confers the quality of the historical on the histories of Israel, Greece, and Rome. If the Incarnation is regarded as the qualitatively central point in history, as the "fullness of time," as the moment chosen by God to reveal His purpose to mankind, it should illumine both the past and the future; for through their impact on Israel, Egyptian and Babylonian history was brought into the main stream of world-history, even though both Babylon and Egypt have decayed and are no longer the seats of their original civilizations. From the standpoint of Time the historical focality of the Incarnation is of supreme importance in our understanding of the purpose of history.² For if to the life of Jesus and all that results from it

¹ Assassinated in 1921 by German Nationalists.

² M. Denis Saurat describes the theory expounded by a French official that Time radiates backwards and forwards from the Incarnation, a thought which has several possibilities for those who like to toy with the theories of Time. "The conception of Christ as being the centre of time implies a capacity in time itself to unfold backwards, since Christ appears to us to have lived some time about A.D. 0 to A.D. 33. From the birth or conception or incarnation of Christ to the beginning of the world time flows backwards; from Christ to us it flows forwards." *The Christ at Chartres*, p. 9, (Dent). As to the place of pre-Christian, such as Greek and Roman, civilizations in history (in reference to the central point of the Incarnation), these can be thought of in terms of the Providence of God as leading up to it and giving it its setting in history. The position of the life of Jesus in the time-series does not make any difference to its historical focality: The theory mentioned by M. Saurat may be fanciful, but it is only a more vivid way of expressing this thought.

is ascribed the source of the major dynamic of history, and not only this but the key to the problem of world-history, there can be no valid reason for regarding history as meaningless. Its meaning is revealed in the Incarnation and in the moral interpretation of history as understood by the prophets. For the New Testament the vast area of human life which is the substance of history can only fully realize its destiny by being the sphere in which the will of God is obeyed. Without such obedience life is under the judgment of God, and can only be redeemed from evil and saved from judgment by faith in Christ. Sin is disobedience to the will of God, and the distortion which history has undergone is the result of sin. Unless this is so the conception of history as *Heilsgeschichte*, the history of salvation, does not make sense, and the judgment of God on civilization which, as we have seen, is the theme alike of *Jonah* and *Revelation*, is no more than a myth without ultimate truth, the product of fancy and imagination and picturesque piety.

A Christian philosophy of history is not directly concerned with the nature of sin and theories of its origin; it is, however, concerned with the redemption of history from a state of already existent sinfulness. Such redemption is only possible through faith in the Incarnate Lord who is the revelation of God who, through His self-revelation, enters the historical struggle, the plane of historical actuality, in order to redeem it from itself. History is given meaning through the perpetual possibility of anastrophe replacing the perpetually potential catastrophe which is the judgment of God.

Secondly: inseparable from this faith in the significance of the Incarnation in any attempt to understand history from the standpoint of the Christian faith is the two-dimensional approach which we have seen is implicit in the idea of the Kingdom of God and the substance of several contemporary attempts to interpret history. The world is not merely the *kosmos* in the Johannine sense: it is one dimension existing within another: the dimension of Time existing within the dimension of Eternity. Human life is physical life, but it is physical life given unity and meaning by the life of the spirit. To the idea of human life as something ephemeral without significance beyond this worldly stage on which its drama is enacted the New Testament opposes the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead, the prototype of which is the resurrection of Jesus. Thus the Christian doctrine of immortality gives to the this-worldly life of man a significance which the fact of physical death would deny to it. Human life reaches its fulfilment not on earth, but in heaven, where God's final judgment will be pronounced. This does not make earthly life any less important: rather, on the contrary, does it give eternal significance to the things that are done on earth. This is clearly the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and is implicit in the rest of the New Testament.

The consequence of this for the interpretation of history cannot be underestimated; for it means that the achievements of civilizations have the same relation to Eternity as has the individual life of man to the immortal life of the soul. Civilizations, like individuals, stand under divine judgment in this world and, consequently (for the judgment of God does not discriminate between Time and Eternity) in the next. Just as the supramundane dimension of Eternity reaches "down" into Time, so does all that happens in the temporal

life of man reach "upwards" into the realm of Eternity. The two dimensions interpenetrate.

Thirdly, the New Testament shows that the purpose of history is not realized through obedience to the natural law, though this is implanted by God in the human consciousness, but *through allowing the Kingdom of God to permeate life*. As Jesus does not describe the Kingdom in precise terms, some attempt has to be made to supplement the indications which the gospel narrative provides, for it is not sufficient to say with Bultmann and Otto that the Kingdom is the "wholly other" and of a dimension incomprehensible to the mind of man. A thing so wholly other that it ceases to have any content translatable into human terms has no meaning for human life at all. The implication of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom is that it is the gift of God, but a gift the nature of which can only be apprehended by the people for whom it is of such great significance. The Kingdom must be *something*, and something discoverable in human terms. In its human aspect it is the world of agapaic values, the practise of which is the true test of man's submission to the divine sovereignty. These values have emerged, or rather have broken, into the stage of history through the life and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and in so far as man incorporates them in whatever systems he designs for his own convenience he is allowing the Kingdom to be embodied in history. History is, in fact, that to which significance is given by the progressive or permeative incorporation of such values and is that which is "given" by the God of history to man so that he may grow into a mature spiritual being through his apprehension of those values as offshoots of the Divine Nature. But because man is free he can accept or reject those values; he experiments with history, and sometimes his experiments lead him to disaster or to failure. History, for the Christian, is the sphere in which is exercised the sense of responsibility which God has planted in man for the purpose of working out his own salvation.

It is because of this that history is so often tragic. The New Testament, however, does not promise that life will not be tragic; indeed, it offers more of tragedy than of the opposite. It takes for granted the tragic nature of history, as though man is doomed this side of Eternity to experience little but frustration. But it is given to man to "overcome the world." The early Christians believed not that the world would grow better and better but, like Marx and Engels, that it would grow worse and worse and be overwhelmed by catastrophe. The divine-human tension would increase, just as for Karl Marx the tension within society and the misery which the proletariat was doomed to suffer would increase. Neither early Christian nor Marxist apocalyptic prophecy has been fulfilled, but the historical tensions have not disappeared, and these tensions produce tragedy. It is not that there is any supreme villain who plans the tragic drama.

In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be; passions spin the plot.¹

And the passions are inherent in human nature as God has thought fit to make it. Yet to those who are obedient to the will of God in Christ, and only to them, tragedy, according to the New Testament, is not final. It may

¹ George Meredith, *Modern Love*, Sonnet XLIII.

appear to be so in the dimension of Time, but man has in him the ability to defeat Time by clinging to Eternity.

"In this world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

That, too, is the theme of the Book of Revelation. But the knowledge of it should not induce us to take the tragic nature of history for granted and do nothing to mitigate it. God, seeing the tragic consequences of human freedom, has provided us with the means of countering what, apart from Him, is the tragic destiny of man. That means is tragedy itself: the tragedy of the Cross. This is the greatest paradox of history and without it there can be no adequate understanding of history.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

I

IN the foregoing pages we have stated the problem of history, the problem of meaning and interpretation, and have very briefly touched on attempts by some philosophers to interpret the historical process. But the problems themselves we have not solved, at any rate on the philosophical level. We have had reason to doubt whether history alone provides the key to its own apparently insoluble riddle. We have examined some of the factors which are involved in the growth of civilization and in the dissemination of values, and the nature of the political and historical crisis of the twentieth century, which is only an illustration of the political and historical crises of any period. We are only more aware of it; whereas historically considered the crises of the past exist, so to speak, in the memory, the contemporary crisis is a matter of daily significance and therefore more immediately charged with historical significance for us. It has been brought to a sharp focus in the problem of Germany (which hitherto has been the European problem): a problem which is fundamentally a political one, but not one which can be separated from the deeper problem of man's ethical and spiritual life. We touched on the relations of politics and ethics, denying that the realm of political action is autonomous, and asserting that politics is an aspect of ethics. It was then contended that civilization, which is the search for form, must have as its "end" the realization of an open society, that the creative possibilities of civilization, above all of the West, must be liberated from the demonic forces by which it is liable to be destroyed, and that this can be achieved only by the redemption of democracy; that is, by the conformity of democracy with the highest, the Christian, conception of man as he is and as he may become: a being made in the image of God. Man is a person with certain rights, to which he is entitled because he is a child of God, and as a child of God he lives within the Providential activity of God. As a historical being, rooted in history, he feels that this

history has meaning and purpose. This purpose, we said, was the production of free spiritual personality. In other words, the place of man in history and the meaning of history are made intelligible in the light of human destiny as it is conceived in the New Testament.

We are led, then, to examine more fully what is meant by a Christian philosophy of history and of politics: that is, to some consideration of what Christian philosophers have said about the meaning and interpretation of history. In this final part of our task we shall confine ourselves to what contemporary thinkers have written. We shall see that there are involved complicated philosophical problems, such as the relation of eternity to time, for underlying the ultimate problem of the Kingdom of God is the relation of these two things. It can, however, be mentioned only in passing. We have a rough idea of what we mean by these concepts, and that must suffice.

Christian philosophers or theologians of history interpret history in terms of the basic doctrines of the New Testament, though not, of course, without including as an ingredient their own philosophy. This is as legitimate as the attempt of any other kind of philosopher, whether, say, National Socialist or Marxist, to interpret history in terms of the doctrine of his own particular political credo. It is what the Nazi philosophers and their precursors, such as Rosenberg, Moeller van den Bruck, Spengler, and others, on the one hand, and Marx, Lenin, Plekhanov, Preobazhensky, and other Marxist philosophers on the other, have done. The Christian philosopher approaches the problem of history, politics, and human nature from a less sectional and more universalist standpoint, and though the philosophy of history is a fairly modern branch of philosophy, there have been few since Marx and Hegel who have given special attention to the matter of interpretation, and they have been philosophers and theologians rather than historians.¹ The most distinguished of them, it happens, are contemporary, and can therefore hardly be said to have little to say to the twentieth century. Had they written during the Reformation they might be thought of as obsolete; but as they are men of the twentieth century, involved in the same political, moral, and social crises as the rest as their contemporaries, profoundly aware of the sociological and scientific changes through which our age is passing, not even the most rigid opponent of Christianity can justifiably accuse them of unintelligently and unintelligibly expressing a blindness to contemporary issues; nor can he accuse them of being representatives of an obsolete way of thinking which has somehow managed to survive into a neotechnic age. That each domain of thought has its own limits is clear; but this does not mean that each domain is irrelevant to the other, and theology is as relevant to life as science.

When, therefore, Christian thinkers of the eminence of those whose views are to be briefly examined write about the interpretation of history in terms of Christian categories, it must be assumed that these categories are as valid as those of modern science and sociology. It may be argued, however, and rightly, that one does not interpret the totality of human life in terms of Ptolemaic astronomy or of medieval science; therefore why interpret history in terms of first century religious thought?

¹ Troeltsch, Croce, and those who are mentioned in these pages are the most important of them.

An answer to this legitimate question would require a lengthy digression into the analysis of different kinds of knowledge, which cannot be undertaken in these pages; it can, however, be said that there are two answers to it. In the first place, religion is interpretative in a manner in which science does not claim to be. Whereas the former claims to attribute meaning to phenomena, the latter must remain content to describe them. Science describes the nature of the universe and the constitution of matter; it does not ascribe meaning to the universe. The spheres of operation of religion and science are different, and the difference must be recognized.

In the second place, a scientific theory may become obsolete, whereas age does not necessarily affect the truth of an idea. The idea of judgment in history is as true for the twentieth century A.D. as it was for the eighth century B.C. If God demands obedience to moral laws, the "divine imperative" was as compelling for first century Greeks as it is for twentieth century Englishmen. The study of Plato is as necessary to the pursuit of philosophy as a branch of knowledge as is that of Hermann Cohen or A. N. Whitehead or Heidegger or any other modern philosopher; perhaps more so. And even though the style of artistic and musical expression changes from generation to generation, even from decade to decade, the artistic forms employed by Michelangelo or Bach are no more obsolete to-day than a century ago, and the head of Nefertiti will be as beautiful five hundred years hence as when it was first designed by an Egyptian artist. In appealing, therefore, to contemporary Christian thought in our search for that which makes "sense" of history, we are not pursuing a course which will lead us to a world of sterile ideas.¹

2

Emil Brunner² has said that "there is no Christian philosophy of history, but there is a Christian understanding of history."

This appears to be a rather narrow distinction; for the Christian philosophy of history *is* the Christian understanding of history. Christian philosophers, such as Berdyaev, who holds that there must be a Christian metaphysic of history, would respect Brunner's statement; but it may be helpful to know what Brunner means when he says that there can be no Christian "philosophy" of history.³

¹ I exclude from this survey excellent "smaller" works such as H. G. Wood's *Christianity and the Nature of History*, Canon Roger Lloyd's *Christianity, History, and Civilization*, and John Macmurray's *The Clue to History*, all of which are strongly to be recommended to the reader.

² Professor of Theology at the university of Zurich. His two great books on Christian anthropology and ethics, *The Divine Imperative* and *Man in Revolt*, form the most comprehensive account in contemporary thought of the implications of Biblical theology and ethics, interpreted, however, in terms of modern Protestant theology, for man's moral, social, and economic life. He differs from his great fellow-Swiss, Karl Barth, in many respects, one of them being his belief that man, in virtue of his humanity, is capable of the knowledge of God, whereas Barth, unless I misunderstand him, regards human nature as so vitiated by the "Fall" that there is no "point of contact" (Barth's phrase) between man and God until redeemed by Christ. Brunner seems to have his feet much more firmly planted on the ground of historical realities. Another great book of Brunner's, *The Mediator*, deals with the doctrine of the Person of Christ. He has written many other books on theology and philosophy.

³ *Man in Revolt*, Lutterworth Press, 1939, pp. 435 ff.

For Brunner history is essentially a dynamic process, involving sin and freedom and the decisions which arise from them. Deed, decision, is of the very stuff of history, though there is no room for it in the idealistic or naturalistic philosophy. Neither type of thought has room for personal initiative, for it imposes a scheme, a logical order, on history.

The Christian *understanding* of history differs from the *philosophy* of it in that it knows of no *a priori* idea made concrete (e.g. the Hegelian "Spirit" or "Absolute"); for it there can be no system only a process "in which the actual contradiction between the temporal-sinful and the eternal will of God is actually overcome by real concrete events," such as redemption, and not the idea of redemption but the act, the historical act itself. "The characteristic element in history is not that something happens but that something is done." "History is made where decisions are made." Decision "separates the historical element from that rhythmical, cyclic process of nature ever returning to itself." A second element in the historical is community, for the individual as such has no history. He is rooted in society. The meaning of being historical is therefore the awareness of solidarity, and in this sense Christian thought is alone truly historical. The sense of solidarity can be traced back to the Hebraic tradition for God established a covenant, a personal-social relationship, with Israel. Yet history is more than the establishment of a covenant with a people; it "does not mean the history of a people with God, but a history of humanity derived from God and going to God."

World-history, Brunner continues, is to be understood in terms of Redemption. But in that case, what significance has "history" which is outside the Biblical scheme? History, that is, in which nothing is known of Christ, as in pre-Christian societies and societies which have passed away before they could have known Christ? In answer to this important question Brunner says that we must distinguish between pre-Christian history, history which is outside Christianity, and history which is hostile to Christianity. Pre-history, which is not history proper, is the sphere of "the pre-suppositions of actual history." It is a kind of preparation, a *preparatio evangelica*. In any case, if we cannot arrive at a proper solution of the problem of meaningless periods of history, we must be prepared to admit that we cannot know or understand the relation of the whole created order to the divine end. Even the most meaningful event in history, the Crucifixion, is seen to be the most meaningful. Our inability to perceive meaning in history, therefore, does not imply that it has no such meaning.

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is of central significance for history.

Through Jesus Christ something has happened which affects even those who do not believe in him. This can already be seen in the fact that to-day everyone, whether believer or unbeliever, asks about the meaning of world-history,

an inquiry which was unknown in the pre-Christian period. Through Jesus history becomes world-history.

It is revelation which gives to history its ultimate meaning and purpose. In its essence it is related to history, for both revelation and history are unique in the sense that neither partakes of the "natural" characteristic of recurrence. "Revelation is the absolutely unique and is for this reason the absolutely

decisive factor."¹ The historical significance of Christianity is its "one-for-allness," its *Einmaligkeit*, which is opposed to nature in that nature knows nothing of the quality of non-recurrence. "The non-recurrent in nature is the non-essential," and the concept of the historical disappears with recurrence.

"As soon as the non-recurrent is absent from historical narrative the latter loses its interest" but "that which is historically interesting depends as much on what is general in human experience as upon the unique. . . . The genuinely great in history is precisely that which combines the greatest measure of uniqueness with the most universally human, as in great world-historical personalities and occurrences."

History as such, Brunner says, cannot say anything decisive to us. A world-historical period or event may have enormous significance for us, but it is not necessarily decisive because of the element of human freedom which makes us independent of it. Revelation, on the other hand, is the "absolutely unique and at the same time the Eternal, therefore the absolutely decisive." Were it not for its character as Eternal such a revelation would not be decisive. But although history, unlike nature, is not cyclic or recurrent, it is only "relatively unique." It is not final in that it provides its own fulfilment. "The historical as such knows no fulfilment, only a striving towards it." It is through the Revelation of the Word that the meaning of history in the sense of fulfilment is disclosed. The coming of the Word means the end of history, but history seeks to escape the Word, which leads to its self-abrogation. That is, history is frustrated by its own nature; through Revelation the meaning of history is disclosed within time; it receives its fulfilment and culmination within time, but nevertheless continues. "History does not lead to the realization of that which *should* happen." If this were not so, history would have come to an end in time. The time is fulfilled, yet history continues beyond the moment of fulfilment. It is comparable with the Odyssey, which is an Odyssey only until home is reached. Hence the historical problem. Man is confronted with crisis, with decision; but the decisive action is not taken. The uniqueness of the Christian revelation stamps history with the necessity to realize the urgency of such a decision.

The decisive nature of the Revelation in its relation to the historical is that before the Incarnation man was confronted only with history; since then he is confronted with the need to make a decision, and through the Revelation which so confronts him man is able to see the meaning of history. He beholds the summit above the clouds. Only the decisive-unique can disclose the meaning and unity of history. The idealist philosophy is able to interpret history in terms of logical unity, but this is not strictly speaking a "historical" interpretation, for it is concerned with the logical unfolding of history, not with concrete happening. It is the Christian revelation alone which gives a really historical meaning to history through confronting man with the need to make definite historical decision.

As the incursion of the Eternal into History the Christian revelation is decisive, precisely because "in it the non-historical, the Eternal, breaks through into Time at a certain point and makes of the *locus* of decision". The coming of Christ is "an occurrence between Eternity and Time," "the historization of

¹ *Der Mittler*, Tübingen, 1937, pp. 269 ff. Translated into English as *The Mediator*.

the Eternal, the entrance of the non-historical into the world of history," "the dimension of God's eternal nature extending into history."

Brunner regards the Revelation through Incarnation as the decisive moment which drives man back to the recovery of his lost innocence, not one to which he must advance. It is the means of restitution.¹

History, then, for Brunner, is a dynamic process, the dynamism of which distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian view of the world. With the Christian revelation God makes a decision, God speaks in such a way that history cannot henceforward be the same as it was before the revelation occurred. But because of the tragic nature of history and because of the fact of sin and of the irrational factor of evil, frustrations arise which prevent history from disclosing its own purpose. "The meaning of history lies where history itself has been overcome and fulfilled." The end of history is not immanent in history but transcends it, entering it from the dimension of Eternity.

In so far as a philosophy of history implies an understanding of history from within, as a logically unfolding process in the Hegelian sense, what Brunner as a Christian theologian offers is an understanding rather than a philosophy of history. The precise term employed, however, is of no great importance.

In his approach to the problems of politics Brunner is concerned with the actual position of the Church in relation to the political, social, and economic situations which may be regarded as divinely provided orders of life now in a state of corruption. Christian theology, therefore, is obliged to speak to these orders, and not vaguely, in general terms, but in the most concrete manner possible. It is not enough to define the spheres in which the state and church are operative: Christian theology is committed to a task which goes much farther than demarcation: namely fundamental criticism of every human order, that is of the stuff of any historical situation at any time. Hence Brunner is drastic in his criticism of the Capitalist system, insisting that a Christian shall have nothing to do with it. "Capitalism is economic anarchy; therefore the Christian is obliged to fight against it, and to fight for a real order."² Theology has precise and definite implications for the sphere of politics, which is to be judged in the light of Christian theological and anthropological principles. Barth, too, holds that the church must rebuke the state as well as serve it; but he does not seem to hold that theology has any precise implications for the activities which are the stuff out of which history is made.³ In this matter Brunner is much more definite than Barth.

¹ For Brunner's interpretation of the Fall, see *Man in Revolt*, pp. 114 ff.

² *The Divine Imperative*, Lutterworth Press, 1942, p. 426. The question is discussed in Sections 3 and 4 of Book III.

³ Barth more than once gives the impression of believing that the church should only condemn the state when its own freedom is threatened by the state. "For the possibility of intercession for the state stands or falls with the freedom of God's Word. Christians would, in point of fact, become the enemies of any state if, when the state threatens their freedom, they did not resist, or if they concealed their resistance" (*Church and State*, p. 69). We have the right to disobey an immoral Government, if to do so means to obey God, but we should pray for its members, even if only that they should be set aside (Gifford Lectures, p. 230, and *passim*).

He denies (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*, II, p. 743) that the church should be associated with any specific political outlook, though elsewhere he says cautiously: "When I consider the deepest and most central content of the New Testament exhortation, I should say that we are justified, from the point of view of exegesis, in regarding the 'democratic conception of the state' as a justifiable expansion of the thought of the New Testament" (*Church and State*, Hodder and Stoughton, p. 80).

Not only is history to be understood in terms of the Christian revelation, but its content and direction are the object of theological study.

3

A different approach is to be found in Paul Tillich's¹ profound and stimulating treatment of the problem of the understanding of history in terms of the New Testament conception of the Kingdom of God. He differs from so many contemporary Protestant theologians in making it clear that to speak of the Kingdom of God in a transcendent sense is not sufficient. Because history and its interpretation are concerned with historical decisions which cannot be separated from political forms, he boldly maintains that a particular political solution is necessitated by the historical situation. There is, he says, no serious grappling with the problem of history without realizing the need for a "present historical decision," which philosophical idealism and theological transcendentalism make every effort to conceal.

The religious interpretation of history . . . has two roots—a religious-transcendent-root, the Christian message of the Kingdom of God, and a political-immanent root, the socialist interpretation of the present. The former supplies the principles and criteria, the latter the material and concrete application. This bi-polar method is essential for any religious interpretation of history.²

The religious interpretation of history is "applied theology" and therefore cannot be content with a purely theological and abstract approach to the historical problem. For any attempt to eliminate the truly political factor results in the destruction of a true interpretation of history.

Tillich defines history as "the totality of remembered events, which are determined by free human activity and are important for the life of human groups" (p. 108). Though dependent upon free human activity it is not dependent on this alone, for nature, though it has in itself no history, not being "free," plays an important part in human history. It is the group which is of decisive importance for history, for the individual has significance only in relation to his position within the group.

Historical *time* is what Tillich calls "directed time"—with an end, a beginning, and a centre, and is qualitative rather than quantitative. Pure successiveness is not in itself important: what matters is the quality, the meaning, of that which happens. Historical time is therefore to be distinguished from physical and biological time; the period before Christ differs qualitatively from the period after Christ, for Christ is the decisive centre of history (p. 110),

¹ Professor Paul Tillich, a distinguished philosopher-theologian who left Germany after the National Socialists came to power, approaches the problem of history as a philosopher rather than as a theologian, and brings his philosophical insight to bear upon the intellectual currents of the twentieth century. Now Associate Professor of Philosophical Theology in New York, he formerly held professorships at Marburg, Dresden, and Frankfurt. His publications include much that is obscure to English readers, but of considerable importance to our understanding of contemporary civilization. One of his most notable contributions to it is the place which he gives to the demonic as a factor in history. A translated selection from his writings has been published in America as *The Interpretation of History*.

² *The Kingdom of God and History*, p. 107.

determining not only the future but the past, that is to say, our valuation of the past.

The meaning of history can be found neither in a final stage of historical development—the ultimate fulfilment of all historical potentialities—nor in an infinite approximation to a fulfilment which can never be reached . . . nor in a transcendent super-nature unconnected with history.¹

Progress, in the usual sense of the word, does not throw much light on the ultimate meaning of the historical process, nor does the naturalistic pluralism of the Spenglerian time contribute much towards its understanding. Nor can a purely transcendental act of God be considered to be relevant to the search for historical meaning. Yet the supra-historical is essential to the understanding of history. It is beyond history yet related to history, and without the unification and purification which it alone can achieve history will be devoid of meaning. In so far as this is true it can be said that the meaning of history transcends history.

The Kingdom of God is the bi-polar symbol of the ultimate meaning of history. It is grounded in the transcendent world, yet at the same time has a social and political character, and is not “wholly other.”

It is a dynamic power acting in history, materializing itself in history although never becoming identical with history.²

History is the battlefield between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world: that is, the tragic nature of history is the consequence of the opposition of the Kingdom to the demonic powers of this world. It is wrong to think of the Kingdom of God as the restoration of an original sinless order, which was destroyed by the Fall, of which we know nothing. It is one element in a dynamic struggle and, far from being a static abstraction, is the “fulfilment of existence against the contradictions of existence.”

What is the significance of the Kingdom of God for history? In the first place, Tillich says, Christ, for the Christian consciousness, is the centre of history,³ appearing in the “fullness of time.” Neither the beginning nor the end of history can be defined in terms of physical time; not in terms of *chronos* but of *kairos*. The fact of the presence of the Kingdom in the world means that the Christian interpretation of history is history as salvation, and

salvation is actualized in history whenever a demonic power in social or individual existence is overcome by the divine power which has become visible in Christ. . . . Salvation means the fulfilment of what existence ought to be by overcoming the destructive, meaning-defying powers of existence.⁴

For the Christian salvation is the meaning of world-history; it is also judgment on world-history, yet the latter can only exist at all because it is “supported” by salvation. World history, therefore, in however fragmentary a degree, is a partial actualization of salvation, to the extent in which the demonic powers are overcome. To hope, however, that the demonic will ever be completely destroyed is to abandon oneself to an unjustifiable and untenable form of Utopianism.

¹ Op. cit., p. III.

² Op. cit., p. 115.

³ *The Interpretation of History*, pp. 243 ff.

⁴ Op. cit., p. 119.

Turning to the present historical situation, Tillich deals with the "present" as *kairos*, as the "moment" which is qualitatively significant for the Christian interpretation of history. Church action, which is the medium through which the Christian consciousness achieves concrete expression in the historical situation, is bi-polar: one pole being the unique centre of history; the other the actual situation at any time from which the action of the church springs. If the unique *kairos* denies this bi-polarity historical action becomes meaningless, for the reality of the Kingdom of God belongs to a sphere above history. This is Tillich's criticism of the dialectic theology and its implications.¹ If, on the other hand, the unique *kairos* is itself denied by over-emphasis on the historical situation, Christian theology falls a prey to changing forms of the demonic, an example being the corruption of theology by nationalism (the "German Christians"). Yet if a one-sided emphasis is laid on action within the church, at the expense of neglecting the function of the Church in society, history is abandoned to the dominion of the demonic force, as an example of which Tillich cites Lutheranism. If the emphasis is on action outside the Church, Church history loses its independence and the Church is unable to give meaning to history.

Tillich enumerates as the "demonic" forces of the present time capitalism, nationalism, and bolshevism; only religious socialists, he says, can overcome the demonic elements in these forces. The present combination of these forces threatens to destroy our present historical existence²: hence the tragic nature of the present situation, and the demand that the Church should deal with it.

He would agree with the others whose views have been described that there is no promise that the demonic (as Niebuhr would express it, the "contradictions") in history will be overcome *in* history; no promise that any final reality, even Christian culture itself, will escape destruction; only a demonic power ventures to give such assurance.

There is only one certainty: that the demonic will be overcome in Eternity. . . . Only in relation to Eternity should we speak of the overcoming of the demonic, not in relation to any time, whether past or future. That we do not ascribe to demonic power equality with the divine . . . that we do not have to let the denial, the abysmal, the senseless, have the last word: that is salvation *in time*, which again and again is realized in fact; that is the fundamental destruction of the power of the demonic over the world."³

This overcoming of the demonic is the main task of the spiritual forces. The oldest example of the attempt to liberate conscious life from the rule of the demonic is ascetic mysticism. "The radical 'No' to all forms of being removes the demonic from existence." This, the Indian method, the way of nirvana, of complete renunciation, fails in its task, though it does succeed in transcending being, but at the cost of repudiating the historical.

The second way of overcoming the demonic is found in the Hebrew contribution to religion.

The jealous God is exclusively anti-demonic, for Godhead is safeguarded only where unconditionality and unity stand over against demonic atomism and cleavage.

¹ As for example, in Barth and Bultmann.

² Op. cit., p. 137.

³ *Das Dämonische*, p. 44. The following quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the same book.

Jewish prophecy is an outstanding attempt to overcome demonic influence by proclaiming the absolute demands of a God who is conceived as creative and redemptive. It is through the prophetic tradition that the anti-demonic character of Western Christianity up to the present has been determined.

A third form of war against the demonic is that of the cults, exemplified by the mystery religions, for example in the myth of the god who allows himself to become the object of demonic destruction and, by suffering and dying vicariously, diverts the demonic from the believer to himself.

The forms of Christianity as hitherto known are not free from the disrupting action of the demonic; still,

the Christian witness has in it the certainty that it has overcome the demonic, and guarantees the possibility of approaching God as He is in truth.

Turning to the present moment in history, Tillich mentions the demonic forces which exercise destructive powers in our time. Having already touched upon them,¹ we shall consider his treatment of them in greater detail.

The struggle against the demonic in any period is the immediate task of religion and politics. Politics in this way is deepened by religious activity, and religion assumes the concreteness of a struggle with "principalities and powers."

One of these demonic influences is intellectualism, for, in the last resort, its effect, when operating in isolation, is to disintegrate and dissolve.

The demonic character of intellectualism consists in this: a thing so constituted rationally that on the one hand it has in itself an infinite potentiality for progress, and in the nature of things must have; and on the other hand, with every step forward the vital, autonomous elements, the personal and social relationships which exist between the perceiver and the perceived, are destroyed. The positive vehicle of advance is itself the destroyer.

Aestheticism is another disruptive influence, for, while the æsthetic impulse as such is creative, it results, if divorced from its lawful occupation, in rootlessness and dissolution.

On the social plane economic and political life have their own form of demonism. Whereas modern economic systems, using the resources of technical advance, have produced more goods than ever before and have correspondingly enriched life, capitalism belongs to the category of the demonic because of its destructive effects on the physical and spiritual life of individuals and classes. It is creative, and at the same time disintegrative. Mammonism presupposes sinfulness, which is an element in all forms of the demonic.

Another, perhaps the greatest, example of the demonic in modern life is nationalism, standing as a positive force over against the pacifism of weakness, mysticism, and the internationalism of both bourgeois and proletarian. National impulses break through all rational defences, and create a consciousness which is proof against the dissolution caused by intellectualism and aestheticism, and prevents the abstraction of organic meaning from life. But it is precisely here that its demonic character is revealed, for it supports itself with lies, with national self-righteousness, and murders in the name of the people, designating its wars as holy. When dominated by capitalism it becomes economic imperialism, a terribly destructive alliance.

As a historical factor the demonic is of the first importance.

The demonism of the political, the ecclesiastical, and the economic is perceptible where the sacred claims of these social forms, their right to exact sacrifice, is perverted; that is, where the result of self-destruction is indissolubly bound up with the actual destruction of faith in their very sanctity.

¹ See Pt. I, ch. 3.

The demonic, being the perversion of the creative element, belongs, therefore, to the realm of antagonism to being, that is, it is a form of sin.

Tillich concludes that there is no way of overcoming the demonic forces which are of such far-reaching historical significance by purely intellectual activity, for intellectualism is itself a form of the demonic, and the mind is corrupted by it. The demonic cannot be overcome by the things which belong to Time, and even Christian culture is itself subject to it and cannot be regarded as exempt from its corrupting effect. The demonic can therefore only be fully overcome in eternity, "in the eternal depth of the Godhead." Only through fixing our eyes on the Eternal can we hope to overcome the demonic.

History, therefore, is the scene of tension between divine and demonic forces. Through Christianity the latter are to be overcome, because it draws upon the Eternal and transcends the anti-positive forces with which it contends. In other words, the redemption of history, according to Tillich, is to be achieved through the Gospel, through salvation, which alone can save history from meaninglessness.

His conception of history and the historical problem is less pessimistic and less grim than that of Berdyaev and Niebuhr; for, according to his view, it is not necessary to wait for the final vindication of right through Divine Judgment (eschatology): history is the process in which the Kingdom of God is asserted and which reveals the essential character of the Kingdom by provoking it to struggle against the demonic nature of historical existence.

4

Berdyaev,¹ as has already been observed, interprets history in terms of catastrophe and eschatology. This, possibly, is typical of a certain type of Russian thought, according to which Russian history was conceived as fulfilling a Messianic mission, and which is exemplified in the writings of Khomiakov and Soloviev, whose famous Conversations on *War, Progress and the End of History*,² express the concern of nineteenth century Russian Christian thought with the catastrophic interpretation of history, and it may be that Berdyaev is following in the same tradition. Marxism, which commended itself in the first place to Russia, has its own form of secularized Messianic eschatology: the proletariat is given a historical function which is in a way Messianic in that it will wind up the present age and usher in the millennium. It may be, too, that Russia will (though not through the Orthodox church) perform a historic mission of the utmost importance, thus fulfilling the dream of the nineteenth century Christian philosophers.

¹ Nicolas Berdyaev occupies a foremost place in modern Christian thought. Belonging to no school, a product of the Russian Orthodox Church, at one time Professor at Moscow University, the possessor of an intellect of unique penetration and analytical power, he has made a precious contribution to the Christian understanding of history in his *The Meaning of History, The Destiny of Man, Freedom and the Spirit, Slavery and Freedom, Dostoevski*, and other books of first importance. In him Eastern and Western Christianity meet, blended in his own original philosophic mind. He is profoundly aware of the nature of the acutely spiritual crisis of modern civilization, and views with concern the disastrous results of a purely humanistic attitude towards life. Berdyaev has much in common with Dostoevski, to whom he owes much.

² English translation by Hagberg Wright.

Berdyaev is less concerned with the Russian mission, which has for him ceased to have any meaning in the sense just alluded to, for Russia is the new order of militant atheism and the embodied denial of Christian values; yet other aspects of his thought are in a line with the manner in which his predecessors envisaged the course of history.¹

He begins his book *The Meaning of History* by stating that "catastrophic moments in world history have always proved an incitement to speculation." The Great War was such a moment, as was the French Revolution, the persecution of the Jews which was the occasion of the writing of the Book of Daniel, and the fall of Rome in 410, which provoked Augustine to write his *City of God*.

The result of such catastrophe has been to sharpen man's awareness of the historical; but what is the historical? In order to understand and define it, Berdyaev says, we must have experienced a "certain spiritual dismemberment," and we must also have developed the "faculty of speculation without which there can exist no possibility either of historical science or of an elaboration of a philosophy of history." There are three types of historical periods: a period that is one of "direct integral and organic experience in some settled historical order;" secondly, the period of "fateful and menacing schism and disruption," in which man is separated from the innermost life, and thirdly, the period which implies the "return to the historical." Catastrophe is therefore the occasion for reflection on the nature of history which calls forth the decision to "interpret" the historical process. It is, too, he says later, the end of history.

Berdyaev's main thesis is that human destiny is the scene of the interaction of the metaphysical and the historical, of God and man, of the Eternal and the Temporal. In fact, history cannot be understood apart from a metaphysic of history. The Aryan consciousness (Greek and Indian) was not aware of the "historical," and therefore has no conception of the interaction and the interpenetration of metaphysical and the historical. This awareness was the supreme contribution of the Jews, whose eschatological hope postulated the fulfilment in time of the yearning for historical meaning.

The strong historical sense of the Jews gave them a rudimentary philosophy of history, but it was Christianity which first provided the key to the historical and introduced the potent force of historical dynamism which has not yet been exhausted. In the Jewish conception of the world the divine and the human interact.²

It is in relation to celestial history that human history takes on its meaning. "The celestial is that deepest reality which propounds the theme of man's relation with God and the absolute source of life." Here is the foundation of a metaphysic of history: not in monism, but in celestial dynamism. Whereas

¹ Berdyaev writes at length in *The Destiny of Man* about "last things".

² "The philosophy of history is in its origins intimately allied to eschatology; and this helps to explain its rise among the Jewish people. Eschatology is the doctrine of the goal of history, its issue and fulfilment. It is absolutely essential for the conception and elaboration of the idea of history, as a significant progression a movement capable of fulfilment. No conception of history is feasible without the idea of fulfilment because history is essentially eschatological; it postulates a final solution and issue, it pre-supposes a catastrophic fulfilment which inaugurates a new world and a new reality utterly different from the world and reality familiar to the Greek, who had no eschatological sense." *The Meaning of History*, p. 33, Bles, 1936.

other systems, such as Platonism and German idealism, result in a kind of "acosmism," introducing a division between an absolute perfect Deity and man, between the immobility of the Absolute and the perpetually changing, conflicting, tragic scene of history, the Christian-Hebraic view of the world is quite different. There is, through the fact of the Trinity, "an interior movement in the divine life," and the second Person of the Trinity is "the very heart of both the divine and the world of tragedy and destiny." The celestial, therefore, is brought actively into contact with this world and is therefore dynamically creative. "To understand the interior relationship between God and man as a drama of freely-given love is to lay bare the sources of history."

Indeed, it is the initiative on the celestial plane which determines the historical destiny of man: "the terrestrial destiny is predetermined by the celestial, in which the tragedy of illumination and Redemption takes place through the divine passion, and that tragedy determines the process of illuminating world history." From this Berdyaev passes on to the further thought, which is a continuation of it, that history is not only the revelation of God but also the "reciprocal revelation of man in God." History reveals not only God, but man, showing how man's tragic destiny is the result of his passionate desire for freedom, which is the fundamental precondition of all history. "There would be no history without freedom." In fact, history in its complexity is made up of the "interaction of the three principles of necessity, freedom, and grace;" the realms of nature, man, and God.

Berdyaev continues his examination of celestial and human history by dealing with the problem of eternity and time, the relation between the two having left a deep impression upon the Christian consciousness. "History is the result of a deep interaction between eternity and time; it is the incessant irruption of eternity into time," which is a more philosophical way of stating what he has expressed theologically in the preceding chapter.

"The historical character of Christianity may be attributed to the fact that the Christian consciousness had conceived eternity as manifesting and incarnating itself in time. The significance of Christianity as it manifests itself in the temporal and historical process lies in its demonstration that eternity or the divine reality can break the chain of time, penetrate into and appear as the dominant force in it."¹

Yet there is a constant struggle between the eternal and the temporal, a rebellion of the latter against the former; a struggle which aims at the victory of eternity. But however the eternal and the temporal may interact, "the conception and interpretation of

history as a complete whole postulates a goal, that is, the termination of this world aeon and stage of eternity which we call our world of reality and life. It implies the victory of the eternal principles over all that is corruptible, temporal or mortal . . ."

Time, as it presents itself to us, is "false and divided," that is we divide it into past, present and future, the past being remote, and the future as yet non-existent. The connecting basis is memory, without which there can be no consciousness of the historical. It conserves the pattern of history, weaving a design out of time.

Berdyaev brings what he has written about time, eternity, the celestial

¹ Ibid., p. 68.

and the historical, freedom and tragic struggle, to a head in his discussion of the historical destiny of the Jewish people with its fulfilment and supersession on Christianity. The Jews were the first people to introduce the feeling for the "historical": this was their mission. Indeed, they are the concrete example of the interaction of the celestial and the human on the plane of history, for their very survival is the denial of the materialistic interpretation of history. It is in the messianic hope that the peculiarly "historical" form of their consciousness is expressed: in the yearning for a manifestation in this world, within time, in the political and religious sphere of national life, the sovereignty of God. They had, too, a passionate concern for justice, for the vindication of right, not as an abstract philosophical exercise, but as a definite ethical purpose to be realized within the life of the nation. The work of the prophets was rooted in history, and it is the prophetic concern for righteousness which is expressed, in a different form in apocalyptic-messianic Marxism and in whatever form of revolutionary political action with which the Jews have identified themselves. The Kingdom was an event of future history, the object of Messianic expectation, and belonged not to any other-worldly hope. The Jewish tragedy consisted in the non-fulfilment of that hope; when the Messiah came, and formed the historical point of coalescence of God and Man Eternity and Time, he was rejected.

It is, however, in the further stage, that which is a repudiation of Judaism and yet the fulfilment of it, that history is seen to be truly "historical." Christianity provides the key to the understanding of history. Its exceptionally dynamic and historical character consists in the principle of freedom which it gave to the world, showing that man is essentially a free spirit made for freedom. In this way it broke finally with the pre-Christian world, which was obsessed with Necessity, not Freedom. Through the liberation of man from the tyranny of nature it set man free to dominate nature and to develop the forces which have brought about modern civilization and man's awareness of his own freedom.

Further, Christianity substituted universalism for particularism, thus setting free the vast political potentialities of man.

Christianity supplanted the ancient world and preserved the values which were worthy of preservation. The fall of Rome and of the ancient world showed that culture "has its stages of birth, flowering, and decay, but that it is also based upon eternal principles." Like Spengler, Berdyaev perceives that there are cultural patterns; we should therefore be cautious not to attribute finality to any human system; for civilizations have in them the seed of decay.

Christianity alone, according to Berdyaev, is able to justify the postulate of universal history. It united East and West and "offered the postulate of a united mankind and a Providence manifesting itself in historical destinies." With its triumph the dynamic force of history was transferred to the West, which has become the centre of world-history. Those peoples who failed to accept it, Berdyaev points out, ceased to be dynamic. Their civilizations lapsed into inertia.

So much for the metaphysical basis which Berdyaev gives to the understanding of history, which is rooted in Eternity and meaningless without the

dynamism provided by celestial action. Its value, however, is not confined to metaphysics; for in the actual historic periods is to be seen the working out of the principle of human and divine interaction, particularly in the negative sense; for with the growth of humanism and the gradual separation in the human consciousness of the human from the divine there comes the bankruptcy of humanism itself. "The free play of human forces unconnected with any higher aims brings about the exhaustion of man's creative powers." Humanism, as we have observed earlier, leads to its opposite: inhumanism, the judgment on man's attempt to work out his destiny independently of the eternal world in which he is rooted. Hence modern history has witnessed the failure of history through the defacing of the human image and of the image of God in man, the culmination of which is the process of disincarnation expressed in the crisis of humanism and the advent of the machine age.

During the humanist crisis, which marks the end of modern history, man experiences a profound sense of isolation and abandonment. . . . Modern man has become isolated, a mere atom. His isolation inspires him with a feeling of inexpressible terror from which he seeks refuge in associating himself with some collective; for otherwise he is threatened with spiritual and material starvation.¹

It is this sense of estrangement and disillusionment which characterizes the end of the modern period. Man is tormented by his frustratedness, by his impotence to realize his aspirations, by the disintegration of the soul which he is experiencing. Because the present period is the "end" of the modern age it has all the features of the catastrophic moment, and from the tension of it man has two ways of escape. He can "either submit himself to the highest divine principles of life and thus strengthen his personality, or he can become the slave and subject of non-divine, evil and superhuman principles. He is free to choose either path: and that is why universal history is the revelation of the Apocalypse."² Therefore a profound and far-reaching question clamours for an answer: what is the goal of history? Is there such a thing as progress? If so, what are its signs?

Berdyayev agrees that the concept of progress is fundamental to a metaphysic of history. It "postulates a goal for the historical and its significant subordination to a teleological principle." Yet in spite of all that can be said in its favour it is "first and foremost an illegitimate gratification of the future at the expense of the past."³ That is, it denies to the generations of the past anything but an instrumental value; they are unable to enjoy the benefits of the final state of progress, of the goal of history, assuming that this is to be "in time." Therefore there is something callous about it: it contains a "fundamental moral contradiction" which degrades those "whose lot has been cast among pain and imperfection." This futurism is thought to be actually

¹ Ibid., p. 161. See also *The End of Our Time*, Sheed and Ward, 1933. In this equally prophetic work Berdyayev concludes that civilization is entering upon "the new middle ages." The future is dark, for man has cut himself off from the spiritual sources of his being and his creativeness has exhausted itself. Both Capitalism and Socialism are dehumanising man. "Man without God is no longer man: that is the meaning of the internal dialectic of modern history" (p. 51). Berdyayev pertinently observes (p. 32) that throughout history man has failed to accomplish his intentions; and now, as part of the rhythm of history, night is about to fall; the decline of the West is inevitable (pp. 69 ff.).

² Ibid., p. 182.

³ Ibid., p. 186.

un-Christian, for it postulates an approximation to perfection within time, which is opposed to the thought of the victory of eternity over time.

Instead of seeing absolute life as the transition from terrestrial to celestial history, it presupposes an ultimate solution of human destiny within the framework of terrestrial relations.

In any case, history has not provided much evidence that there is such a thing as progress: it is too tragic and catastrophic to enable one to see in life anything more than advances and setbacks: there is a development of distinctive types of cultures which flourish and decay, no straightforward development along a straight line. The past can give no guarantee that the future will be any better. The doctrine of progress, however, is not valueless, any more than humanism, within limits, is valueless. But history is not to be understood in the light of that doctrine. The end of history lies outside history. So far the historical process has failed, and its failure is to be interpreted as the failure to realize the Kingdom of God. And if "Christianity" is thought of as the goal of history, Berdyaev consoles us with the thought that the ideals of the Christian faith cannot be realized within time. "They can only be realized by a victory over time, by the transition from time to eternity, by the triumphant passage from the historical to the super-historical process."

Berdyaev concludes by saying that history must have a culmination, otherwise, if it just went on and on, it would cease to have any meaning; but on the other hand, it cannot have a culmination in human time. Hence the infinite tension and the insoluble paradoxicality of history.

As Berdyaev admits, this metaphysic of history is a tragic and pessimistic one. History is a tragic process, and can be redeemed by itself only through the redemption of freedom through the divine initiative; but this man has rejected. The redemption of history, then, will have to be achieved by a catastrophic act from without, from the plane of the celestial.

Such is Berdyaev's interpretation of history. Is it acceptable? How much truth is there in it? How can it be related to the problems of civilization as we have seen them confronting us? Let us take some of the leading points which have emerged in this outline of his philosophy.

Firstly: history as the irruption of eternity into time. This is fundamental to any Christian conception of history. It is the New Testament doctrine, above all that of the Fourth Gospel; it is the substance of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God.

Secondly: the catastrophic nature of history. If history does not point to perfection within time, it certainly does not indicate an eschatological-catastrophic end to the historical process. As long as the initiative remains with God there is no reason why the end of history should not be anastrophic rather than catastrophic. The only certain end which can be foreseen is the gradual running-down of the universe according to the law of entropy. Berdyaev does not attempt to suggest the character of the catastrophe which will be the fulfilment of the historical process.

Thirdly: if the end of history is catastrophic, this would surely suggest some kind of a culmination within human time, and not fulfilment on the plane of eternity. Berdyaev seems to contradict himself here.

Fourthly: what is the goal of history? Why should it not be reached by a gradual process which we can describe as progress? There is no reason why the "intermediate" generations should be considered of instrumental value only, for every generation judges its present status in relation to emergence from the past rather than to an undefined future state. And is it not true, as Berdyaev himself suggests, that each generation makes its own contact with Eternity? He refers with approval to Ranke ("*Jede Epoche ist unmittelbar zu Gott*") and to Dostoevski: every generation has its own goal, spiritual values, and spiritual impulses; and even if history is sectionalized in this way, instead of being regarded as a straight line, it has its advantages: a generation is an end in itself as well as the means of adding another step to the march of history.

Despite criticism, however, Berdyaev has provided a valuable contribution to the Christian understanding of history as something which is inexplicable without the celestial background and doomed to failure unless it is continually dynamized by the Divine breaking into the world of man, and in giving proper prominence to the Hebraic tradition he has, as others have done, singled out at least one nation whose destiny is charged with a world-historical mission of the greatest significance. As with all prophetism, Berdyaev's philosophy of history is full of warning: man is free, but he is free to bring about his own doom unless he is prepared to use his freedom in order to return to the source of all being and find his inspiration for living in the dimension which is outside human time.

It is the greatness of Berdyaev that, as one of the foremost of contemporary Christian philosophers, and as one who has given much thought to the problems of history and civilization in the light of Christian philosophy, he has thought fit to give freedom a central place in his view of the world. It is in freedom, not under authority, he says, that the vision of God is given, and it is in relation to freedom that human history has significance.

In his two great books *Freedom and the Spirit* and *The Destiny of Man* Berdyaev deals with spiritual freedom as the concept which is most fundamental to Christian theology and to the understanding of history. "God," he says, "does not force us to recognize him, for His purpose lies in freedom of the spirit, and He is only revealed in the freedom of its life. . . . The divine action of grace presupposes the action of human freedom. . . . Faith is a free spiritual act, for without freedom faith is an impossibility."¹

Freedom and spirit are for Berdyaev two inseparable qualities, and without freedom, which is one of the leading Christian, and especially Johannine, ideas, the world-process is meaningless.²

Berdyaev predicted that the time would come when the Christian Church would become the main protagonist of freedom, asserting that Christian freedom is opposed to all tyranny, whether from the right, left, or centre, whether the state be anarchist, socialist, or aristocratic. He realizes the definitely irreligious character of the modern state, and sees in Christianity the only bulwark against the total secularization of modern life.³

¹ *Freedom and the Spirit*, Bles, 1935, p. 105. Berdyaev's philosophy of freedom is expounded (under Dostoevskian influence) in his brilliant monograph on Dostoevski and in the last of his works to be translated, *Slavery and Freedom*.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 121 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Yet modern civilization, he holds, has been made possible only through the spiritual victory of Christianity over nature, of spirit over necessity; but the mechanical-materialist conception of the world in which it has resulted is profoundly inimical to the spirit of creative freedom which has liberated its formative forces. Much of modern civilization is a form of *disincarnation*, because the machine is separating flesh from spirit, and the organic synthesis of soul and body is disappearing. Progress is to be found not in contemporary humanism, which, though it may have contributed to the diminution of cruelty, has also led to the cruelties of atheism and depersonalization, depriving man of the deepest kinds of freedom. Spiritual development means the victory of spirit over nature, yet for Christian thought the primary idea is not progress or development but illumination or transfiguration.¹

The historical significance of Christianity consists, therefore, in its creative dynamism, and in this way it contains the seeds of historical progress, even though progress is not its primary concern. It came into the world as a dynamic, not as a static, faith. "Each word of the Gospel is but a hidden spring of an infinite process of development."

Berdyayev sees history as a fluid process, its purpose being through freedom to produce a free society. Creativeness is the essence of freedom, and where there is no freedom man cannot be creative. History is therefore a creative process in so far as the impulse behind (or within it) is the dynamic of freedom. The only two really *living* moral principles are "love and gracious regeneration of life on the one hand and freedom and justice on the other."²

For this Christian philosopher creativeness is the substance of all living ethics as contrasted with the ethics of law and rigid morality; it is the power which unites man to God, for God, like man, is a Creator. The Holy Spirit is God in free creative action. History is the sphere of such free creativity.

5

Reinhold Niebuhr³ seems to have several points of contact with Berdyayev: he sees history as a tragic process, rejects the idea that there can be any progress towards perfection within time, believes that humanism, which is a form of revolt against God, is powerless to redeem history, and maintains that the end-purpose of history is something transhistorical and can only be described in terms of the apocalyptic eschatological symbols of the New Testament. Human destiny, from the purely human standpoint, is being continually prevented from reaching its fulfilment by the sinfulness of human nature, from which man can only be redeemed by the Incarnation.

In the second volume of his *Gifford Lectures* Niebuhr expounds the character

¹ Ibid., p. 315.

² *The Destiny of Man*, p. 177.

³ Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and one of the most brilliant and stimulating thinkers of his time, is the author of the well-known work *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, in which he discusses the relevance of ethics to collective life, especially to politics; his Gifford Lectures, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, which provided one of the most comprehensive accounts yet offered of the implication of Biblical thought for the realm of history and the study of forces operative in civilization; *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*; *Reflections on the End of an Era*; and *Beyond Tragedy*.

and implications of the Christian interpretation of history as he understands them. The fundamental problem of human destiny is "how the transcendent meaning of history is to be disclosed and fulfilled, since man can discern only partial meanings and can only partially realize the meaning he discerns."¹ The historical religions contain an answer to this question in terms of Messianism and prophetism; only where history is regarded as having meaning is there a Christ, who is expected

wherever history is thought of as a realm of fragmentary revelation of a purpose and power transcending history, pointing to a fuller disclosure of that purpose and power. He is expected because this disclosure is regarded as both possible and necessary.²

Hence the most "historical" religion, that of the Hebrews, is a prophetic one impregnated with Messianic expectation. This prophetic element is not primarily concerned with the finiteness of human endeavour, but with judgment on the "proud pretension of all human endeavours, which seeks to obscure their finite and partial character and thereby involves history in evil and sin." The main problem of history for prophetism is: how history can be anything more than judgment? which means: how is it possible, if at all, for the meaning of history to be revealed? For judgment implies both self-frustration and divine condemnation, either of which imposes a limitation upon the historical process. The prophetic approach to history shows that it stands in contradiction to the divine will; otherwise judgment would not be pronounced upon it. Messianism, however, is confronted by a problem which goes farther down. The final enigma of history is not "how will the righteous gain victory over the unrighteous, but how the evil in every good and the unrighteousness of the righteous be overcome."³ Niebuhr, in his interpretation of Messianism, puts an absolute limit in the way of historical development: even the human good is vitiated because, being human, it cannot be free from evil. What the Messianism of Jesus does is to show that it is the vicarious suffering of the representative of God and not some new force in history which finally clarifies the obscurities of history and discloses the sovereignty of God over history."⁴ Messianism, therefore, in its Christian form the coming of the Christ, is essential to any understanding of the historical problem, as the answer cannot be given from the human side. In fact, the Incarnation is not taken seriously where history is understood as solving its own problems by the cumulation of knowledge⁵ and ignores the inherent opposition between the two dimensions of Eternity and Time. Yet "it is not true that life would be meaningless but for the revelations embodied in *Heilsgeschichte*. Life and history are filled with suggestions of meaning which point beyond themselves."⁶ It is, however, the intervention of the Divine which illuminates and clarifies such suggestions.

When prophetic Messianism affirms that life and history are under the sovereignty of a hidden God it declares, not that life and history are meaningless, but that they can be understood only in terms of a dimension deeper and higher than the system of nature, that there are obscurities and contradictions in the "behaviour" of history which can be clarified only if the unique purpose of God is more fully disclosed."⁷

¹ *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, II, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 5 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

History points to something beyond itself, but being sinful it cannot by itself resolve the contradictions which are inherent in it.

The new thing according to which history is to be judged is the *agapé* of Jesus, which is the *agapé* of God. Jesus' work is threefold: it completes what is incomplete in the apprehension of meaning by historical cultures; it clarifies the obscure and corrects the falseness which human egoism has introduced through its effort to comprehend the whole of life from an inadequate centre. The Cross, which is the expression of *agapé*, expresses the limits of what is possible in human development. It does not guarantee success for *agapé* in history, for the *final* justification of *agapé* in the New Testament is not found in history itself.¹ *Agapé* does not expect "immediate historical validation," for it derives from the suprahistorical. It is the answer to all humanism, for it proves to be false the "strategy of human brotherhood which has no other resource but historical experience."² In this way history is a tragic process, but it is also beyond tragedy.

"Christianity's view of history is tragic in so far as it recognizes evil as an inevitable concomitant of even the highest spiritual enterprises. It is beyond tragedy in as far as it does not regard evil as inherent in existence itself but as finally under the dominion of a good God."³

The self-revelation of God is the fact which gives meaning to history. Because of the nature of history it must be something from without that is alone able to give it this meaning. The Christian religion

asserts that God's word is relevant to human life. It declares that an event in history can be of such a character as to reveal the character of history itself; that without such a revelation the character of history cannot be known. It is not possible to arrive at an understanding of the meaning of life and history without such a revelation. No induction from empirical facts can yield a conclusion about ultimate meaning because every process of induction presupposes some canon and criterion of meaning.⁴

What, then, is the specific contribution of Christianity to the understanding of history? and what has it to say about the end and purpose of history? For "everything in human life and history moves towards an end" which is *finis* and *telos*. It is, however, possible, that the *finis* may be reached before the *telos*, and in this case the purpose of history will not be disclosed or realized.⁵

For Niebuhr the eschatological and apocalyptic thought of the New Testament, though symbolical, is to be taken seriously, for it expresses the truth about human destiny.

There must be a culmination to history, and this

must include not merely the divine completion of human incompleteness but a purging of guilt and sin by divine judgment and mercy.⁶

The ideas of the Parousia (the Second Advent), the Last Judgment, and the Resurrection of the body are to be understood neither in the fully literal nor in the fully symbolic sense. The Parousia is the expression of faith in the sufficiency of God's sovereignty over the world and history; it is His triumph "in" history, in which both quantitative and qualitative fulfilment coincide,

¹ Ibid., p. 92.

² Ibid., p. 100.

³ *Beyond Tragedy*, p. xi.

⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵ *Nature and Destiny of Man*, p. 297.

⁶ Ibid., p. 297.

refuting both excessive utopianism and excessive other-worldliness, though it is a consummation which fulfils rather than negates.

The Last Judgment shows that Christ will be the judge of history, judging its sin, not its finiteness. It expresses the emphasis on the good and on the evil in history, and has its *locus* in the "end" of history.

The doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is indicative of the contribution which nature makes to human individuality, for according to it eternal significance belongs to the whole unity of spirit and nature; it also guarantees that in the life to come individuality will not be absorbed into the Divine but will exist in a state of differentiation.¹

New Testament eschatology means that God will assert Himself finally.

"The biblical conception of the Kingdom of God is of an ultimate triumph in, or at least at the end of, history."²

Only from the standpoint of the "last" can history be understood, for it is "a total process which requires understanding from some "last judgment," which may be a "final" judgment on particular evils in history without waiting for a "last" judgment, without consequences within history, or it may be a judgment the consequences of which are to be seen in history.

As for the problem of world-history or, as Niebuhr calls it, the unity of history, he feels that historical pluralism, that is the separate historical existence of different cultures, "cannot escape the question of comprehensive meaning." It is true that cultures die in the end, but it should be remembered that they have also lived, and that their life is testimony to the creativity of history.³

The meaning of history is something which can only be known by faith, for the rise and fall of civilizations has to be viewed from the vantage-point of "an eternity above history, which no man has as a possession but only by faith." History is from this point meaningful "because eternal principles are vindicated in both the life which overcomes death in rising civilizations and in the death which overtakes proud life in dying ones."⁴ However, history "represents a total realm of coherence which requires comprehension from the standpoint of its ultimate *telos*."⁵ Civilizations are not absolutely independent of each other, for there is a "residual minimum of social and cultural experience which is deposited by one civilization and used by another." There is contact in length (succession) and in breadth (contemporaneity), and increasing unity is being given to history through increasing breadth, that is through the extension of contacts in time and space between the nations.

The New Testament alone is able to provide the point from which the character of history can be understood, and to this understanding its eschatology is organic. In the figure of Anti-Christ it offers the permanent embodiment of the demonic which is history's self-frustration; it offers the conception of the transcendent Kingdom of God which is "relevant to every moment of history as an ideal possibility and as a principle of judgment upon present realities."⁶ Without discussing how far New Testament eschatology is valid

¹ Ibid., p. 306.

² *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 280.

³ *Nature and Destiny*, II, p. 316.

⁴ Ibid., p. 318.

⁵ Ibid., p. 324.

⁶ *Beyond Tragedy*, p. 286.

Niebuhr says that "all the known facts of history verify the interpretation of human destiny implied in New Testament eschatology."¹ Niebuhr, however, is clearly aware of the difficulties involved in a too close adherence to these biblical concepts, and warns the reader against the danger of interpreting them too rigidly in terms of space and time.

"This effort to picture the end of time from inside the time process is the cause of most of the literalistic corruptions of the Christian conception."²

In Niebuhr's exposition of the New Testament view of history there is a certain grim obsession with Divine Judgment, as though at all costs human history must be fitted into a reinterpreted framework of New Testament eschatology, which Niebuhr, having accepted as a necessary Christian emphasis, is at pains to make congenial to the Christian who lives outside the remote world of eschatology and apocalyptic. If a criticism is to be made of his exposition and his conception of history it is that it suffers from an excessive biblicism.³

6

Dr. Toynbee's vast survey of the genesis, growth, decay and disintegration of civilizations is what it professes to be: a Study of History.⁴ It is a monumental work in which an enormous number of facts is assembled upon which a conception of the rhythm of the life and death of societies may be founded, an analysis and an inquiry into origin and movement rather than a philosophy

¹ *Nature and Destiny*, II, p. 330.

² *Ibid.*, II, p. 310.

³ Another representative of what I might describe as the transcendental interpretation of history is H. D. Wendland, who, like the above-mentioned, considers that the Christian view of history is an eschatological one. With Niebuhr (*Nature and Destiny*, II, p. 53) he holds that history is an interim between the coming of Jesus and the "end" of the world (*The Kingdom of God and History*, pp. 144 ff.). The Kingdom of God cannot be realized in secular history because "the realization of Christian ideals in society ends in the radical secularization of the Christian world." "Sacred history," therefore, would seem to be something lived within the secular world but not permeating it. This conception suffers from the familiar error of the "new" theology: a distrust of the human end of Tillich's bi-polar relationship between the Kingdom and the historical situation. It may also be a survival of the tendency which has overtaken historic Lutheranism. Wendland also rejects the "natural theology of history" (p. 156) according to which God is thought of as being "in" history. He believes, however, that God guides and directs history, but that He is the hidden God, the *Deus absconditus*. Evil can never be overcome by moral progress: "the New Testament sees the most frightful concentration of Satanic power take the place just before the End. That is a proof that God's sovereignty is at hand is not progress, but a sharp distinction between faith and unbelief" (p. 163). The "end" of history is not a mere symbol: "The parousia of the Lord is the end of history and of this age at a particular time and hour, towards which the world's history tends" (p. 165). "The demonic element in history should be recognized, but there is a danger that the Church, in exposing the demonic forces at any time may become a kind of 'disguise for our own political decision against a political system and a political idea.' That is no doubt true, but to say so may also be an excuse for avoiding the responsibility which a historical situation places upon the Church: the responsibility of exposing in the prophetic manner the extent of the revolt of human systems against the Divine, and the separation between their actual historical condition from their essence as 'orders' under which we live. It is easy to appreciate the dilemma of those who do not want the Church to be corrupted by being too deeply involved in secular history, but the Church cannot escape such 'involvement.'" (Niebuhr's term.)

⁴ A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vols. I-VI, Oxford, 1934-8. Dr. Toynbee is Director of Studies in the Royal Institute of International Affairs and Research Professor of International History, London University.

of history. One of the things emerging from it is that civilizations (or cultures, to use Spengler's term) have patterns which are more or less regular; they have their births, their periods of growth, of florescence, decay, stagnation, and death. Toynbee describes the causes of their genesis and the political and spiritual factors contributing to their dissolution. I do not propose to offer an account of the enormous ground covered by Toynbee's *Study*, as its plan is too intricate; but certain aspects of it are relevant to the matter under discussion: the Christian interpretation of history. I shall therefore give some account of what I believe to be the theological implications of Toynbee's work. We should, however, bear in mind that Toynbee is a historian, but that the background against which he surveys history is a Christian one, and we shall see, too, that he expresses thoughts which in their character and implication resemble many elements in the theological interpretation of history as we have seen them expressed in the work of theologians proper.

Toynbee discusses the geneses of civilizations as explicable, firstly, in terms of race and environment, but concludes that these are inadequate explanations of the stimulus which drives early societies out of inaction into movement. There are, of course, environmental causes, such as the challenge of nature, of the human environment, of hard countries, blows, pressures of various kinds; and in this action of challenge and response he finds the motivating impulse of the historical process. In his search for the origin of this impulse he postulates some supracosmic challenge which, he believes, is best described in primitive myth; for myth is not simply story, it is a vehicle of truth. The challenge-and-response is a physical, human, activity; but its deeper cause, Toynbee suggests, is not physical but metaphysical.

If our unknown quantity is neither Race nor Environment, neither God nor the Devil, it cannot be a simple quantity but must be a product of two: some interaction between Environment and Race, some encounter between the Devil and God. That is the plot of the *Book of Job* and of Goethe's *Faust*. Is it, perhaps, the plot of Life and of History?¹

Toynbee proceeds to a detailed examination of myth and the light which it may throw on the problem of the motivation of history; which is the result of some kind of interrelation.

We have the choice of conceiving this relation either as an action between two inhuman forces—like the petrol and the air which interact in the engine of a motor car—or as an encounter between two superhuman personalities. . . .

An encounter between two superhuman personalities is the plot of some of the greatest stories and dramas that the human imagination has conceived. An encounter between Yahweh and the Serpent is the plot of the story of the Fall of Man in the Book of Genesis; a second encounter between the same antagonists is the plot of the New Testament which tells the story of the Redemption; an encounter between the Lord and Satan is the plot of the Book of Job; an encounter between the Lord and Mephistopheles is the plot of Goethe's *Faust*; an encounter between gods and demons is the plot of the Scandinavian *Voluspa*; an encounter between Artemis and Aphrodite is the plot of Euripides' *Hippolytus*. . . .

We find another version of the same plot in that ubiquitous and ever-recurring myth—a "primordial image," if there ever was one—of the encounter between the Virgin and the Father of her Child.

In all these primitive folk-myths there is the same theme: a superhuman encounter which has repercussions in the world of man. It is, perhaps, not altogether an advantage to cite *Faust*, which is a sophisticated modern poem; the framework is in that sense artificial and the intuitive value of the poem

¹ *A Study of History*, I, pp. 271-2. See the rest of the section to p. 299.

is not the same as that of the other epic myths which Toynbee has mentioned. However: that is the scheme. In *Faust* as in these other poems the scene opens with inactivity, with the Yin state which has yet to be converted into Yang.

On earth, Faust is perfect in knowledge; Job is perfect in goodness and prosperity; Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, are perfect in innocence and ease; the virgins—Gretchen, Danae, Hippolytus—are perfect in purity and beauty. In the astronomers' universe, the Sun, a perfect orb of incandescent matter, is travelling on an unimpeded course through Space. In the biologist's universe, the Species is in perfect adaptation to its environment.¹

Something, therefore, to provide movement, has to transform this actionless state into action, that is, to create history. In every version of the supracosmic drama, when one of God's creatures is tempted by the Devil, God is given the opportunity to recreate the world.

The Devil's intervention has accomplished that transition from Yin to Yang, from static to dynamic, for which God had been yearning since the moment when His Yin-state became complete, but which it was impossible for God to accomplish by Himself, out of His own perfection.²

Without putting any literal or narrow interpretation on these imaginative myths or regarding them as factual indications of the nature of the geneses of civilizations, the indication of Toynbee's use of them is that historical motivation, requiring a hypothetical explanation in the absence of a certain factual one, can best be explained in terms of a metaphysical hypothesis. The various challenges and responses which he enumerates take place, of course, in the realm of this-worldly historical action; but the prior cause is not to be found in such factors as race, external pressure, and the various external stimuli which are exercised. These are immediate rather than ultimate causes.

So much, briefly, for the genesis of civilization. But having spoken of history, is it possible, or justifiable, to regard history as a unity, to speak as others have done, of "world-history"? Toynbee denies that we can thus speak of history; for the modern idea that the Westernization of the world is equivalent to its unification requires a "violent distortion of historical facts and a drastic limitation of the historian's field of vision."³ Toynbee rejects this idea for the following reasons: (1) Historians, having assumed that the present unification of the world on a Western basis on the economic sphere is to be equated with unity, have exaggerated the range in Time and Space of a phenomenon which may yet prove impermanent. (2) This vision of "unification" is limited to the economic plane, and does not necessarily penetrate into the deeper levels of cultural life. (3) Further the doctrine of the "Unity of Civilization" requires the historian "to ignore the difference which distinguishes the continuity between two successive chapters in the history of a single civilization." Lastly, it ignores the histories of civilizations which do not fit into the picture. Toynbee is surprised that Freeman should have maintained the thesis of the "Unity of Civilization" in a generation when archæology had not disinterred seven of the twenty-one civilizations—an excusable error; but that historians to-day should follow him is to be deplored. In a word,

¹ Ibid., p. 276.

² Ibid., p. 284.

³ Ibid., pp. 151 ff.

he would appear to agree with Spengler (as we have already had reason to suggest) and even with de Gobineau in perceiving that there are "civilizations" but as yet no one uniformly diffused "civilization." There is a grave danger in equating the Western Society of our day, universally diffused though it may be, with the consummation of human history, thereby treating it as synonymous with "civilization" itself.

From the survey of history one thing stands out conspicuously: that fourteen cultures have, for one reason or another, failed to achieve the ultimate goal which is believed to be at the end of the long march of mankind.

Moreover, in the nature of the case, it is quite impossible for members of a living society to forecast, with any degree of probability whatever, the chances of this achievement being accomplished (if it is to be accomplished) by their own civilization. . . . When we find that a majority of the members of all societies at all times make this assertion about their own civilizations, it becomes evident that their guesses have really nothing to do with any objective calculation of probabilities but are pure expressions of the egocentric illusion.¹

This distinguished scholar, then, discourages us from taking a too optimistic view of history, and his warning is not incompatible with interpretations of history such as those of Berdyaev, Brunner, Niebuhr, and others. History possesses no immanent logic which leads its observers to definite conclusions about its goal "within time," nor about the ability of any one civilization to provide the fulfilment of the purpose of historical existence.

Having inquired into the geneses and growth of civilizations, Toynbee proceeds to investigate the causes of their breakdown and disintegration. Here he is on less disputable ground and can take his stand on more assured fact. These causes can be broadly classified under the headings of "Schism in the Body Social" (emergence of dominant minorities, internal proletariats, external proletariats, the sense of estrangement between classes, etc.) and "Schism in the Soul" (involving attitudes towards the sense of sin, abandon, the sense of drift, vulgarization of the Dominant Minority and its consequent barbarization, syncretism in religion and art, futurism and archaism in cultures, the breach in secular culture and religion, and other manifestations of the disruption of culture).

As for archaism and futurism, Toynbee considers that these are forms of escape which are doomed to failure because as means of escaping from the Present they are no more than retrospect and prospect on the plans of Time "without rising above the spiritual plane of mundane life on Earth." Archaism defeats itself, whereas Futurism transcends itself, and in doing so ceases to be mere Futurism, for it transcends itself "by rending the veil of mundane appearances and bringing into view an Other World of a higher spiritual dimension."

The way of life in this Other World is thus revealed to human souls on earth through a recognition of the bankruptcy of one of the two alternative ways of seeking a change if life without leaving the mundane level; the mystery of Transfiguration is apprehended in a reaction against the fallacy of Futurism.²

Detachment, which is a method *in the present* of escaping from the present, of trying to achieve some kind of spiritual integration, is, like the return to an obsolete archaism, doomed to fail. In the form of Stoicism it has its admirable

¹ Ibid., p. 160.

² Ibid., VI, p. 132.

features, but this, again, is a feature of disintegration : in this case of Hellenic society. It has to be eclipsed by the philosophy of Transfiguration.¹

Toynbee is compelled by his observation of the process of historical existence to turn towards something more-than-historical in his approach to the totality which includes both the process and the redemption of the process. For example : the revulsion felt by modern man from the concept of sin is an indication of the spiritual condition of the modern world : the sin of pride, among others.

Will modern Western man repent of, and recoil from, his *ὑβρις* before it finds its nemesis in *ἄτη*? If this is the riddle of the destiny of our Western Civilization, the answer cannot yet be forecast in a generation which has been born into a critical act of a tragic drama. But we may anxiously scan the landscape of our contemporary spiritual life for any symptoms that may give us ground for hope that we are regaining the use of a spiritual faculty which we have been doing our worst to sear and sterilize.²

Toynbee detects in the present historical period the "increasing moral subservience of a sinking Dominant Minority to a rising Internal Proletariat" which is part of the "disintegration pattern."³

He points out that a further symptom of disintegration is a "second rally" marked by the "establishment of a Pax Oecumenica" and that "unlike our forefathers we in our generation feel in the depth of our hearts that a Pax Oecumenica is now a crying need."⁴ If we are to search for a modern parallel to other civilizations which have disintegrated we can find it in the "Time of Troubles" which has lasted from the sixteenth century to the present time, and this should cause us great anxiety, for in other cultures the "Time of Troubles" has led to the "grand finale" ushering in a "universal state" which "has been a self-inflicted knock-out blow from which the self-stricken society has never been able to recover." It may be the case, however, that we have not yet been abandoned to this last period of hardening and disintegration.

We may and must pray that a reprieve which God has granted to our society once will not be refused if we ask for it again on a contrite spirit and with a broken heart.⁵

Toynbee clearly holds that history is not self-explanatory, and that its redemption lies in something outside itself. Civilizations have broken down because of some defect : social or spiritual, or both. There is yet time for our Western Civilization to remedy its defects and to discover the means of preventing its own breakdown. This means is the way of Transfiguration, and that is, through allowing the world of another dimension to inform this world : through the reflection of the *Civitas Dei* in the *civitas terrena*. Commenting on Luke xvii, 20-21, Toynbee writes :

We may say that the Kingdom of This World is possessed and informed by the *Civitas Dei* as matter is said to be penetrated and shot through by Radiation. The realms are not external to one another in the dimensions of Space and Time, since only the lower of the two is confined to these dimensions, whereas the higher simultaneously occupies and transcends them—and, in virtue of this all-pervasiveness, co-exists with the Kingdom of This World all the time and everywhere.⁶

¹ Cf. Berdyaev.

² Ibid., V, p. 439.

³ Ibid., VI, p. 456.

⁴ Ibid., V, pp. 313, 314.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 319-20, 321.

⁶ Ibid., V, p. 396.

It is this Kingdom to which we turn as we ask for the source of Transfiguration as the only possible form of escape from a disintegrating society after rejecting Futurism and Detachment.

Christ is incomprehensible both to the Futurist and to the philosopher : to the former because of his declaration that his Kingdom is not of This World : the Zealot, who expected the Messianic Kingdom, would have none of the Kingdom of the Other World when it was proclaimed. And the philosopher rejected Christ because the ultimate aim of the philosopher is Detachment, and nothing resembles Detachment less than the career of Christ. The Kingdom is conceived in a dimension which neither the Futurist (the Messianist) nor the man of Detachment (the philosopher) can grasp, for it is in fact "incommensurable with any kingdom that could ever be founded or ruled by a Messiah envisaged as an Achaemonian conqueror who has been turned into a Jew and been projected into the future." The relation of the Kingdom to history is that of Eternity to Time :

As far as this *Civitas Dei* enters into the Time-dimension at all, it is not a mere dream of the future but is a spiritual reality which is at all times present in This World besides existing as well in an Eternity and an Infinity that are in a supramundane spiritual dimension.¹

The presence of the Kingdom of God in This World is manifested in the operation of the Spirit; and this operation, which since the beginning of Time has never been withheld—though it may now and then have been suddenly intensified—transfigures the World, and in transfiguring, redeems it.²

But how, Toynbee asks, can the Kingdom be in this world and yet not of it? How can its dimension impinge upon the world of time, with its different dimension? He uses the illustration of an aerial photograph of an English village which from above can be seen to occupy the site of a Roman encampment, on which the inhabitants are dependent. Without the empire of which it is a survival their lives would have been quite different, and the empire of which it is piece of late remaining evidence is one which spreads far back in time and, in influence, extends far into space. So does the Kingdom exist as the unseen but nevertheless inescapable precondition of historical life. From this encampment site can be derived some idea of what Rome has meant, and how Roman civilization spread across Europe and Asia Minor. This background cannot be seen, but it is, so to speak, *there*. The emergence of the Kingdom of God in Time and Space in Christ is the proof of its universal extension and unseen reality. The Eternal-Transcendent is made historically immanent in the Incarnation, where the two dimensions meet.

In the person of Christ Jesus—Very God yet also Very Man—the divine society and the mundane society have a common member who in the order of This World is born into the ranks of the Proletariat and dies the death of a malefactor, while in the order of the Other World He is the King of God's Kingdom—and a King who is God Himself and not God's less-than-divine deputy.³

The secret of the Kingdom is Love, dynamic Love, not the accompaniment of a peace which is the philosophic peace of Detachment; and Toynbee quotes Augustine as saying that what gives life to an organism is something which does not proceed from itself but which is above it, and that what gives happiness

¹ Ibid., VI, p. 156.

² Ibid., VI, p. 157.

³ Ibid., VI, p. 163.

to a human being is not something which proceeds from human nature but something which is above it.

The happy issue out of all our afflictions is to be found "in enrolling ourselves as citizens of the *Civitas Dei* of which Christ Crucified is king."

Such, for a Christian historian, is the solution of the tension experienced in a disintegrating civilization. But is our civilization in this state of disintegration? That is a question which is not answered, though throughout the analysis of the symptoms shown by a disintegrating society Toynbee marshals a mass of evidence which, if accepted, causes us to look at the present stage of history with great misgiving. He may, as Niebuhr maintains, lay too much stress on the rôle played by minorities, and it is quite possible that things may happen which may reverse the direction in which Western civilization appears to be moving; that, judging by what has already been said, is what Toynbee hopes for. The rhythm of history is not, we hope, irreversible. If the founding of "universal states" is a symptom of disintegration, the last desperate attempt to hold societies together, then the present yearning for a "world order," a "federal Europe," the extension of international government and the close co-operation of states is little more than a sign of despair. But why? If the purpose of history on the this-worldly plane is the creation of an "open society," which is one of the themes of this book, a "universal state" and the hope for its realization should be regarded as marks of a re-birth of political wisdom. Toynbee observes¹ that when civilizations break down and dissolve they leave behind them universal states, universal churches, and barbarian war-bands. Yet these may be more than "by-products of social disintegration." What they are we cannot yet say, at any rate as far as our own civilization is concerned, and the fact that they are not just the wreckage of societies is proved by the deposit of values and institutions which is absorbed by succeeding cultures.

8

From this survey of the various interpretations of history offered by contemporary Christian thinkers we may conclude that there are several ways of viewing the vast panorama of human destiny through Christian eyes. One thing, however, is common to them all: the conviction that history is not meaningless, that human decisions are the stuff of which it is made, and that the strivings of individuals and of communities are given significance through reference to something which is not part of history but "beyond" it. The purpose of history is the development of individuals into free beings who can be called the children of God, and this purpose may be fulfilled or frustrated by those whose possession of this freedom may turn into God's children or into rebels against him. Some of these interpretations are grimly realistic—or grimly pessimistic: whichever term may be preferred. Those who hold them appear to have seen more of man's folly than of his creative urge; yet their pessimism is not the unbelieving pessimism of a Spengler: rather is it the despair of men who see what human history could be and at the same time are sorrow-

¹ Ibid., VI, p. 325.

fully aware of what men have made of it. There are some, such as the late H. A. L. Fisher, who believe that history has neither meaning nor purpose and that there can therefore be no philosophy of history.¹ But whether there can be or not is a matter of opinion. At the lowest, it may be that history can do no more than provide some evidence of Nemesis, not of ultimate purpose.

With that the Christian philosopher would agree up to a point; but only up to a point. For he sees in the great sweep of the historical movement, in the marches and counter-marches of armies, in the fall of despots, in the consequences of tyranny, in the rise and decay of civilizations with whose history he is familiar, what he believes to be the finger of God reminding each generation of the penalties which have been paid for wrong decisions and sinful ambitions. But not always. Tyrants have flourished, and their kingdoms have not collapsed. The Russian Revolution of 1917 cannot be said to be a judgment on the bloody-minded Ivan the Terrible but on the inefficiency of the Romanov administration immediately preceding it, and on nineteenth-century feudalism. The slave trade was morally a bad thing, but it did not bring about the downfall of Britain or of the United States, though the American Civil War was one of its consequences. There are in history many loose ends which we cannot tie or bring under any general law, just as there are problems of personal relationships and of personality which we cannot solve. History, like personality, is incalculable. But the Christian philosopher believes that, despite this incalculability, man is a potential child of God, and should be treated as such. Although the outcome of history is concealed from us, we should regard ourselves and our fellow-men as beings possessing "immortal longings" and destined for eternal life both now and hereafter.

To the Biblical conception of the destiny of man the Christian is committed; not because it happens to be "in the Bible," but because this alone does justice to man as he is. The Hebrew conception of man as a being answerable to a higher justice both as an individual and as a member of society leads naturally enough to the emphasis on judgment upon the human situation, and whatever we may think about the historical reasons for it, doom fell upon both Israel and Babylon. The "last days" did engulf Israel in utter political ruin. We are living too near to our own historical situation to be able to say whether doom will overtake us in the near or distant future, and nations have an unexpected capacity for recovery. We cannot foresee how strong Germany, for example, will be in fifty years from now, nor can we see at present to what decline the abandonment of the Christian religion may lead Britain. Civilization, as Spengler believed, has a habit of moving as far as a certain point and of then remaining more or less static. Perhaps the Westernized nations have reached this point; we cannot, at present, know. But if there is any validity in the Biblical view of history two things must be given prominence in our account of it and of the Christian philosophy of history in general: the immediate relevance of the realm of values to the contemporary world at any time, and the assumption that somewhere, in one form or another, judgment will be pronounced upon the failure or success of civilization to achieve a Commonwealth of Value. In other words, history is the scene of the emergence and the expansion of moral values, above all of freedom and goodness.

¹ *A History of Europe* (Arnold), I, p. vii.

Berdyaev, as we have seen, has given freedom primacy in his philosophy, and much earlier Dante, in his great vision of human destiny, also considered it to be a fundamental factor in deciding the present and the future of the soul.¹ It is the misused freedom to repent which brings the sinner to Hell, for the subject of the *Inferno* is the punishment of man because he has not only committed sin but has refused to repent of his sin. The judgments pronounced upon the inhabitants of Hell are not examples of the condemnation of personal immorality alone, but also of historical decisions which are immoral or which lead to anarchy instead of to unity. Dante's great poem brings the realm of the historical within the sphere of the Eternal. Despite its essential medievalism, the *Divina Commedia* remains for all time a monument to a man's conviction that temporal history is of significance for Eternity; that human decisions cannot escape the approval or the disapproval of God. This is not the belief of the "modern man," but it is the belief of the Christian, and in this, as in many other things, the Christian may be right and the "modern man" wrong.

In this both medieval and modern Christian thought agree. History can "go wrong" because the decisions of men are wrong decisions. But the means is provided whereby the freedom of man to make his decisions can be guided and transformed and history redeemed. That is the substance of what has been written by Brunner, Tillich, Berdyaev, Niebuhr and Toynbee. World-history, Brunner says, is to be understood in terms of Redemption, which is to be achieved through the acceptance of the Christian revelation. Tillich sees this Redemption taking the form of the victory of the Gospel over the demonic forces. Berdyaev, though his earlier thinking is strangely obsessed with the catastrophic, sees history as the realm in which Eternity irrupts into Time, and human destiny as fulfilled in terms of freedom. Niebuhr emphasises, perhaps over-emphasises, the element of judgment, history being in his view a total process demanding a "final" judgment. Toynbee, approaching the question as a historian, not as a theologian, regards history as something to be transfigured by the Kingdom of God, as the scene in which the Other-Dimension of Eternity informs the This-Dimension of temporal civilization.

Between these various approaches to the understanding of history there are considerable differences, as may be expected from people rooted in different traditions and with divergent judgments. But the points just enumerated are common to them all, and these form the substance of their philosophy, providing a clear indication of the character of a Christian philosophy of history. It

¹ "Lo maggior don, che Dio per sua larghezza
fisse creando, ed alla sua bontate
più conformato, e qual ch'ei più apparezza,
fu della volontà la libertate,
di che le creature intelligenti
e tutte e solo furo e son donate."

Paradiso, V, pp. 19-24.

("Supreme of gifts, which God, creating, gave
Of His free bounty, sign most evident
Of goodness, and in His account most prized,
was liberty of will the boon wherewith
All intellectual creatures, and them sole,
He hath endowed.") (Cary.)

is through the redemption of man that history itself will be redeemed. The New Testament story describes how that redemption is to take place; we may, with Dante,¹ wonder why God has chosen this way for our redemption; but that He has done so is the reason for the existence of Christianity.

NOTE ON KARL BARTH (for theologians only).

There is little in the theology of Karl Barth², as I understand it, that can be described as philosophy of history. Indeed, both his theology and the view of human nature which derives from it make it difficult to see how he can hold an interpretation of history at all in the sense in which it is understood in these pages. His theology is in the first place one of revelation and is concerned only in a minor degree with history. His emphasis is throughout the divine activity rather than on the human object of this activity. He indicates the significance of Christ for history, as every Christian theologian is bound to do; but beyond this he has little to say.³

The question of revelation is, of course, bound up with the relation of Time and Eternity—our time and God's time. Indeed, the Incarnation is not only the Word becoming Flesh, but the Word becoming Time,⁴ and the entry of the Word into history is really "God's time for us." Yet Barth contends that the "modern problem" of "revelation and history," which asks how human time can at any point be understood as the Time of God's revelation rests upon a misunderstanding of the nature of revelation; for the essence of revelation is that neither the "old" nor the "new" time is abstract, and there is no real distinction between the revelation of divine judgment and that of divine grace. The "time" of the Old and New Testaments is continuous, for "genuine expectancy and genuine recollection are both testimony to revelation;"⁵ that is, the period B.C. and the period A.D. are not, for God, discontinuous historical periods. Still, the moment of revelation in Christ is God's time breaking in upon "our" time: it is God's time for us.

As for the relation between revelation and history: "Revelation is not a predicate of history, but on the contrary, history is a predicate of revelation." Barth, however, does not go so far as to say that history is one of the media of revelation.⁶ Indeed, it is difficult, to see how, on the basis of his theological presuppositions, he can go further than he has done in his occasional references to history as the object of theological study. In the Barthian system God and the world seem to be so far removed from each other that there is little in man or nature with which God can make contact. Revelation as a historical activity of God must have as its object a creature which, by virtue of its own nature, is able to accept that revelation and see in his own historical life the concrete expression of revelation. This Barth would deny. There must, however, be some point of contact between God and man, or there could be no communion between them. But having made this concession he expresses his emphatic disagreement with Brunner, who finds this "point of contact" in the divine image in man. This, says Barth, is not permissible. It is only through reconciliation through Christ, not through any inherent quality of human nature, that this "point of contact" is established or restored. The image of God in man has been completely annihilated through the "fall" of man, and this destruction removes from human nature any natural aptitude for God or receptiveness to the divine revelation.⁷

¹ *Paradiso* VII, pp. 55-57.

² In his first notable book, *The Commentary on Romans*, Barth makes some references to history, but they are difficult to understand. The judgment of God will end history, for it is to be "the radical winding-up of history, the No under which all flesh stands, the absolute crisis which God intends for the world of man, of time, of things." It is the "radical suspension of the historical" (*Der Römerbrief*, 5th ed., Munich, 1929, pp. 51-2). History, in the sense of chronicle, is only "photographed and analysed chaos," of which sense is made through the intuitive understanding by the historian of what he describes. In contrast to *Historie*, *Geschichte* has a single and coherent theme; *Historie* is of use only when it helps us to see the meaning of the present through the past (pp. 122 ff.).

³ *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, II, p. 75 (Zollikon, 1938).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁶ Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Redemption and Revelation*, chap. 9, p. 158, where history is so considered.

⁷ *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I, pp. 251-2, Munich, 1932.

Such radical corruption as Barth seems to imply, if extended to the realm of history, makes history meaningless from the standpoint of creation, for history is vitiated from the beginning, and is therefore evil. If there is any good in history, it cannot be because of any initiative on the part of man but is due to the grace of God. Barth may have other ideas about history, but this conclusion seems to be the only one which can be drawn from his premisses.

The political problem, however, does exist for Barth as a problem of theology, though as one which confronts and challenges the Church theologically rather than as one which demands social-political action from the Church.¹

CHAPTER FIVE

EPILOGUE

OF LAST THINGS

I

THE non-philosophical and non-theological reader of these pages, if he has succeeded in working his way through them and has followed their arguments to the end, may ask, with some perplexity: Assuming that what the Christian theologian or philosopher says is comprehensible, how far is it valid? What evidence is there that the Christian philosophy of history contains the truth which is claimed for it? The New Testament World was very different from the modern world; there is even some uncertainty as to how, precisely, its ideas are to be understood. Its exponents, further, appear to be dealing with abstractions with which life as it is commonly lived has little contact, and their presuppositions and conclusions seem to be purely speculative. The twentieth century is above all the century of the political and the economic, of the social philosophies, of the empirical sciences, not of metaphysics. It is the domain of action and decision, not of speculative thought.

He who is driven to frame such thoughts as these can be excused if he regards the historical and the philosophical as two opposed categories and considers himself to be involved in the former but not in the latter. He may, too, incline to be impatient with the intellectual elaborations and embroideries which, to him, are the philosopher's method of obscuring what should be naturally clear and making the incredible and the abstract seem ponderous and plausible. In other words, he may question the validity of the Christian understanding of history and civilization.

The claim that the Christian interpretation of history is valid and, moreover, reasonable, is based on its realistic approach to human nature, to civilization, and to the problems of politics. To begin with, Christianity is itself a historical religion with a clear historical context, and the men who wrote the New Testament were concerned with the empirical facts of human nature and human history and not only with a Kingdom not of this world. They found that, in their own experience, Christianity answered the problems which confronted them and illuminated the human situation with a light coming from beyond

¹ See his *Gifford Lectures*, ch. 19, *The Church and the Political Problem of our Day, and Church and State*.

this world. That is the least that can be claimed for the New Testament writers, and the history of the Christian religion and of Christian thought, despite the temporary eclipse of religion in the twentieth century, has borne out this claim.

As to the wider matter of Christian philosophy in general, it can be said that it is based upon moral realities just as, for example, Marxism claims to be based upon economic realities. History is the scene of frustrations and of finite strivings after the infinite. It is the sphere of trial and error, of visions and decisions, of hopes and ambitions, of irrevocable acts; the sphere in which politics as a separate activity of man has not succeeded in fulfilling these hopes and in realising these ambitions. We do not need to be moral philosophers in order to know that sin is inextricably woven into the pattern of history; our own experience teaches us that, for the results of sin are apparent in every historical situation; this sin, which brings judgment upon itself. Further, any view of man which pays due regard to human nature as a whole must realise that not only is man involved in nature but that he is able to transcend nature. Indeed, his transcendence of nature is one of the characteristics which are most human. Human life points to something beyond itself, for man is dissatisfied with existence purely on the level of nature. He is a "Faustian" being, ever dissatisfied with the dimension in which he finds himself. Civilization, moreover, is the creation of man while aware of his own transcendence over nature. Primitive man ceases to be a "man of nature" (*Naturmensch*) when he becomes a civilized man (*Kulturmensch*). The creation of institutions is evidence of man's far-reaching vision, and the farther he moves from the plane of the natural and biological the more complicated are his institutions, which transcend the life of the individual in becoming the organs of the supra-individual, that is, of society. Man, however, not only transcends nature through the creation of supra-individual institutions: the fact of religion itself as a historical phenomenon shows that the "hunger of immortality" is an aspect of human nature as real as the biological. Man, in other words, is a spiritual being, and any view of human nature which ignores or minimises this is incomplete and fails to do justice to the facts of experience.

It can be claimed, therefore, that a comprehensive Christian philosophy takes into consideration all the empirical data supplied by an intelligent observation of human nature in all its manifestations—political, economic, social, æsthetic—and that in each of them the awareness of finiteness is contrasted, in one way or another, with a quest for the infinite. The farther human life moves away from the biological level the more do men become aware of the fact that they are never free from this tension: a tension which, experience teaches, cannot be wholly solved on the plane of human institutions. Political attempts to solve it have usually been disastrous, for there is, as we have said, a demonic element in politics and in human institutions generally which increases the sense of frustration in proportion to the faith which one has in them. History is given meaning, therefore, civilization is to be transfigured, and politics redeemed through the contact of the tangent of Eternity with the Historical, and through the acceptance of Divine sovereignty as the source from which the many forms of human sovereignty are derived.

Each historical period, each generation, has its own "style," its own intellectual and spiritual mood, and produces the documents by which future historians are to be able to assess its contribution to the rich treasury of human history and culture. One period may be great in art or philosophy, another in action, a third in scientific investigation. Each is part of the total human picture and each is as necessary to it as the other. The present age is not rich in documents testifying to man's awareness of a spiritual world. But there have been ages rich in such things, and in each age there are some in whom are shown the rarer facets of the human spirit. These testimonies to the "spiritually-minded" are therefore as valid as are testimonies to the "naturalness" of man, and to understand him in his completeness we must (in our modern jargon) have an "overall" picture of him. To this picture belong the Bible, the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, the *Divine Comedy*, the records of the Christian mystics, the deeds of Christian men of action, the literature of piety, and theology. These, and the personal experience which inspired them, are as much and as valid a part of the human scene as the writings of Shakespeare or the journeys of Captain Scott, and are not made obsolete because the twentieth century genius expresses itself in a different form. It is these documents which record man's self-transcendence and his belief in a non-material world, the New Testament word for which is the Kingdom of God and which twentieth-century man in his folly and his overweening pride imagines to be illusion. Religious experience is as valid as any other kind of experience. Its validity is questioned by the sceptical; but so may the validity of empirical experience be questioned in the same way, as it was questioned, for example, by Berkeley. Scepticism destroys not that against which it is directed but the very ground on which the sceptic himself stands. And a philosophy of history which fails to give a place in its interpretation of history to religious thought and experience ignores the most intimate and profound of all human activities.

But even though the validity of the Christian approach to the problems of civilization and of history is granted, the adequacy of its interpretation may be doubted or denied. It is, in the last resort, unverifiable.

It may be unverifiable, as the statement that Shakespeare is a great poet is, judged by scientific standards, unverifiable. Many things are unverifiable, but not, for that reason, untrue. The Christian understanding of history is adequate, because it offers an answer to the problems with which history and civilization confront us; it offers answers which the mind of man can and does accept, though they may not be acceptable to everyone. The issues dealt with in these pages—morality, government, civilization, freedom, and judgment—are profound and far-reaching; they cover the major part of human life; and ever since men began to think systematically about their world they have provided the themes which have engaged the greatest minds. There is no indication that men will cease to think about them in the future; and the fact that this is so might suggest that there can be no such thing as finality where they are concerned. In any case, man is unwilling to accept finality, for it sets a limit to his endeavours, and this, because he is man, he finds unendurable. And that which is not final is incapable of verification. Ultimately, therefore, there can be neither adequate understanding of man nor a Christian, nor any other, philosophy of history without faith.

It is at this point that the choice seems to be between acceptance or rejection. Either faith or reason is final; we walk either by faith or by sight. But it may well be that faith is a higher function of reason, and that, if we include in our picture of human nature only that which belongs to the rational, we are omitting from it the most important of all human attributes. The momentary popularity of reason and the unpopularity of faith are irrelevant just as music is not invalidated because an unmusical generation may fail to appreciate the charm of Mozart. Indeed, faith is as much an element in the human picture as is reason, and we know well enough that we do walk by faith, rather than by sight, in wide areas of our life. Where ultimate things are concerned, however, faith rather than reason becomes operative, though it is hoped that the objects of faith will not fail to commend themselves to reason when enriched by the insight which faith can give to it.

And it is with ultimates that the Christian interpretation of history is concerned: God, truth, freedom, what lies beyond death, human nature. These are not only ultimate but intangible, yet no less real because they are intangible. In entering the realm of ultimates we are entering the realm of faith, but faith should not be divorced from reason and knowledge, any more than reason should be divorced from faith.

Judgment has been mentioned as one of the ultimate things. It is the judgment of history which gives the Hebraic-Christian interpretation of history its validity; for history is full of it, and it is always, for somebody, contemporary. Our present historical situation is a judgment on the politics and morality of a generation; and the most sobering influence at the present time is not so much an acute sense of right and wrong, that is of moral issues, as fear lest man's inventive genius combined with his political intransigence should plunge the world into dissolution. Men are afraid of a terrible judgment, but without any real understanding of its nature. And it is this fear, this judgment, actual and potential, which provide the irrefutable validation of much of the Christian interpretation of history.

2

The thought of God is history: human history, civil history, the history of this civil humanity in which God became man and dwelt among men, and proclaimed that His Kingdom, the Kingdom of God that is the Kingdom of Man, the Kingdom of the God-Man, is not in this world of sorrows and joys, of hates and loves, of memories and hopes. . . . History is that which God thinks and goes on thinking. And he who lives in History, more or less audible and visible, whatever the manner of his life, however far beneath the surface it may be, lives in the thought of God, and in Him he abides, and abides with God's thought.¹

In this fine passage Miguel de Unamuno expresses in vivid phrases the thought which has been prominent in the minds of those who have set out to understand history in terms of Christian faith and experience: the Temporal is somehow linked by an indissoluble bond to the Eternal. As we have seen, it is the theme of the New Testament; in differing ways it has been the theme of Christian philosophy from Augustine to the present day: history takes its significance not from the world of nature but from Eternity, from

¹ M. de Unamuno, *Andanzas y Visiones Españolas*, ed. Austral, Buenos Ayres, 1941, p. 158, essay on the Tower of Monterrey.

super-nature, trans-nature. It is the scene of the intersection of the human-temporal dimension by something "direct from above" (Karl Barth's phrase), It is this which lies behind the Biblical view of human destiny, a view which runs consistently from the beginning of the Bible to the end.

For only in such dimensional terms can this human destiny be adequately conceived and understood. In the New Testament this irruption of the Eternal world into the world of human Time is bound up to a considerable extent with the eschatological outlook, and contemporary theologians have attempted to present the permanent elements in this outlook, concerned as it is with "last" or "ultimate" things. The New Testament itself bears witness to the fact that the expectation of the "last things" in the literal sense of the imminent winding-up of the universe died away with the course of time. A catastrophic end of the world as a gigantic cosmic catastrophe is a thought which belongs not to the category of historical but of fanciful thinking. Yet it is possible that there may be a catastrophic end to modern civilization.

But if it is decided to retain this eschatological perspective, stripping it of any precise time-factor in the rigid and literal sense, it can be seen to mean that the "fulfilment" of history will still not take place as part of the historical process, as the culmination of tendencies within history itself; that is, it will from our this-worldly standpoint, which is that of history and time¹ not be realised at all. Why? Because the eschatological interpretation is such as to make impossible its fulfilment within history.

The modern mind finds it hard to accept this view of human effort; yet it is equally difficult for the Christian or a non-Christian realist to accept the other, the Utopian or optimist-progressive, view that man will advance to a human embodiment of the Kingdom of God, for there is little hitherto to encourage profound faith in the ability of mankind to make such progress; but it may be still too soon to say whether enlightenment and wisdom are doomed to defeat at the hands of error and wickedness. It is true that history is to a great extent the story of disaster and catastrophe; but to say so is not equivalent to admitting that history is *by nature* disastrous and catastrophic. There is no evidence whatever in history that it will move onwards towards a culmination in which the historical process is finally wound up and, as it were, absorbed into the Eternal order of the Wholly Other. We do not know how history will "end," or even how we may imaginatively conceive that end; therefore we are scarcely justified in seeking the key to history in the end of the world-process or in the eschatological "fulfilment" which will not be a "fulfilment" of history so much as a final, irrevocable seal upon its failure. There is always the possibility that the Commonwealth of Value may be sometime realised in the Kingdom of Man. It may be unlikely, but no more so than the eschatological theory of the "end" of history.

¹ I am content to leave to more competent philosophers than myself the difficult task of explaining what time is. Bergson, Prof. Alexander, Mr. Dunne, Mr. J. B. Priestley, and others have dealt with the subject in various ways, and F. H. Brabant, in his Bampton Lectures on *Time and Eternity in Christian Thought* (Longmans, 1936) has outlined the history of the idea of Time in relation to Eternity, assembling the Biblical and patristic references to Time and Eternity. Augustine was one of the first to discuss the subject adequately. Barth (*Dogmatik*, II, pp. 50 ff.) discusses it in some detail. "Our" Time is "fallen," "lost" time, not Time as God created it. (See also Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny* II, pp. 310 ff.)

It is questionable, too, whether a modern philosopher of history is under any obligation to seek to modernise or reinterpret the apocalyptic fancy of later Judaism, even though it may have been taken over by the New Testament writers.

If, however, the doctrine of Last Things be thought of not in terms of something which happens in the form of judgment at the "end" of history¹ but as judgment which is always contemporaneous and pronounceable on any historical moment or period, it will be seen to have value in relation to our inquiry into the meaning of history. We do not know anything about an assumed "end" of history, but we do know that every age is under the judgment of God, is to be appraised or condemned in relation to certain ultimates, and that by its fruits it will be known and will be judged accordingly. The periods of crisis and disaster are believed by those who believe in human history as the sphere of divine judgment to embody the pronouncements of God upon the misguided efforts of man to build his civilization and his political orders without reference to the demands of God for obedience to His will. The ancient story of the Tower of Babel is perennially relevant to the human situation on all its levels. The defiance of God results in disaster. In the pride of our modern humanism we think that we can challenge God by building a huge structure without His help, and our efforts are confounded. Such is the religious interpretation of history; yet, as Hegel pertinently observed, the one thing that history teaches is that man does not learn from history.

But this does not mean that human effort as such is doomed. The view according to which history *cannot* be fulfilled within history, in the sense that its meaning and culmination belong to super-history and that the "goal" of history is outside history, suffers as much from determinism as orthodox Marxism or the behaviourist-mechanist psychology. It really means that no matter what we do, our efforts cannot succeed beyond a certain divinely imposed limit; strive as we will, we shall not add anything of effective ultimate value to the achievements of man. If our interpretation of history in terms of freedom is acceptable, man remains free to realise *within* history a state of historical actuality which is the human embodiment of eternal values derived from the suprahistorical dimension. If man is only theoretically and not actually free to realise this, because of the "No" of divine intervention at the end of the world-order, his freedom is an illusion.

There is no need, then, to postulate an end, a goal of history as something which comes as a final winding-up of the world-order. History may not, as far as our human knowledge goes, provide on the secular level the answer to its own enigma; at any rate the answer is not yet in our possession. Further, despite the eschatological character of much of the New Testament, its concern with Last Things, the expression of its most complete theological development, the Fourth Gospel, has, in the main, abandoned eschatology and substituted for it the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. History is no longer interpreted in terms of apocalyptic but of Incarnation, of Divine Transcendence made Immanent in history. The Word has been made Flesh. The clue to

¹ Cf. Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, pp. 280 ff., C. H. Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, where the "last" things are understood as ultimates, not as "finality" in the time series.

the fulfilment of history is in the present as well as in the future; not only outside and beyond history, but in it, through God's intervention.

Let us, therefore, speculate as little as possible about the precise character of Last Things, of which we can know nothing (for they are beyond human knowledge), and find in the past which is unfolded in the present the key to the relation of Eternity and Time. This key, Christian theology has always maintained, is found in Revelation; in the Incarnation of the Word of God, to which all our historical judgments are referred, but which belongs not only to the past but to the present and the future.

For the world lives under the judgment of God. Through the Incarnation men have been enabled to understand once and for all the nature of the forces which alone can redeem history and politics. Through the historical act of the transcendent God the spiritual values necessary to the rescue and redemption of civilization and politics have become immanent in human life and at the same time are rooted in the more-than-human. They have been revealed to us, and only in so far as we are obedient to that Revelation can we hope to turn aside history from its tragic course. The rejection of God by contemporary western civilization may, or may not, be the last word of Western man; we do not know. In any case, we tend to think of history far too much in terms of the West, whereas the East may yet have its major contribution to make to the realisation of world-history. Nor can we say that God has finally pronounced judgment on the West. If He has, doom may not overtake us; and in any case races and individuals endure, no matter what fate may overtake the visible forms which are the embodiment of their cultures. The "goal" of history is not a Parousia or a Last Day, but a condition of earthly life which will be the full expression of the Divine will as revealed at a point in the past (the Incarnation), but at a point in which Eternity and Time coincide, at the confluence of the Eternal and the Temporal, of the Kingdom not of this world and human history. Historical disasters are the judgment of God upon wrong values, wrong morality, wrong politics, evil, and the sin which is in the heart of man, and ultimately it is in the light of the entry of God on to the stage of history that they are to be understood for what they are.

There is this truth, however, in the eschatological element as a conspicuous factor in the Christian interpretation of history. As individuals we cannot share in the fulfilment of human racial destiny, in the Last Things, whatever form this fulfilment may be thought of as taking. History as an all-embracing movement will reach a moment in which its unity is manifested and the strivings of generations will be seen to have meaning. But the individual who belongs to the intermediate generations will not be able to share in this "moment." The Last Things will not be for his enjoyment. The Kingdom of Man which is the Kingdom of God will not be there for his participation in it. Some have found this to be unjust and have rejected the idea of progress because it puts the intervening generations at a disadvantage; they are of instrumental value only.¹

¹ E.g. Berdyaev and Ranke. Cf. H. G. Wood, *Christianity and the Nature of History* (Cambridge University Press), pp. 190 ff. "How can posterity enjoy a condition of general happiness, when they realize that those who have made it possible can never share it?" Probably as easily as we enjoy what others have won for us.

Now, this means that I, as an individual, must seek my own completion as a personality rooted in history but in something more than history. Whatever my personal achievement in this life, however my own life may approximate to the ideal which I have set before me, I cannot experience the satisfaction which should derive from the knowledge that the rest of my kind knows its historical destiny to have been completed. I may think I have understood the meaning of history; the secret of existence may have been disclosed to me; but the race as a whole has not experienced these things, and great numbers of it have not yet emerged from the pre-historical state. Others frustrate the universal realisation of what I know to be the true end of man; others, again, have no desire to know what it is. As an individual I cannot wait for the final period of fulfilment, if there is to be one. It is with my own self that I am concerned, with my own "hunger of immortality," in Unamuno's phrase. I must therefore make the great leap of faith, and jump, as it were, from this temporal plane to that of the Eternal. It is not from the actual, concrete situation in history, not from the achievement of civilization that I derive my belief in the meaning of this historical process in which I am involved. I must seek the fulfilment of my *personal* destiny not in Time but in Eternity. As a supreme act of faith I affirm the immortality of the soul, no matter how near the present stage of history may be to the Kingdom of God, nor how far it may be from it. My individual destiny is not dependent upon the collective destiny of the race.

That is the significance of faith. In the words of Unamuno:

Faith seeks the impossible, the absolute, the infinite, the eternal: life in its fullness. Faith is communion with the whole universe, working in Time for the sake of Eternity; not for History, but for Eternity. Faith is preaching by night in the midst of the desert.¹

Repeatedly Unamuno returns to this theme: that the real is the Eternal, and the historical a dream on the surface of the ocean of Eternity, that it is in the Ideal that man must seek the meaning of life, rather than in the tragedy of historical existence. Both Unamuno and Berdyaev are at one, not in disparaging the historical, but in locating the centre of history in the Eternal.

For us the Last Things are not the winding up of the universe, but the end of our earthly pilgrimage. It is then that, for us, history comes to an end, and our destiny as individual persons will be fulfilled on a new and strange dimension. Of this dimension, through our endeavours to realise a Commonwealth of Value, through our awareness of the Kingdom of God in our midst, through love, pity, and suffering, truth, beauty, and goodness, and the things which are indestructible, we shall already have experienced something; for our Time is but the "moving image," in Plato's famous phrase, of that world which is the source and the conserver of all values. History may fulfil the mission appointed to it: namely, the realisation of the Kingdom of God; the tragedy and the tribulation of this world may be overcome as men learn to master nature and their own impulses. But for those of this generation that time is far distant, and if our hope of it is in this life only, we are of all men the most miserable.

¹ *Ensayos*, II, p. 219.

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